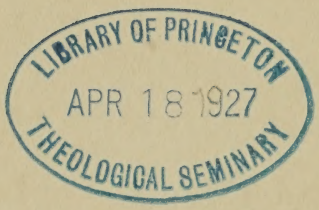
THE FAITHS: Varieties of Christian Expression
Edited by L. P. JACKS

MODERNISM IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH

Prof. PERCY GARDNER, D.Litt.



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Modernism in the English
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BY

PERCY GARDNER, D.Litt.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

A WORD of explanation seems to be needed in regard to the title and the sub-title which have been chosen for this series.

There is *one* faith, says St. Paul; but the title of the series indicates more than one. A difficulty unquestionably exists at that point. It has not been overlooked.

Had the promoters of this series adopted the former point of view and called it "the Faith" instead of "the Faiths," they would have answered in advance an important question which the series itself should be left to answer. But, equally, by calling the series "the Faiths," instead of "the Faith," have they not prejudged the question in another way?

Of the two positions the latter seemed the less dogmatic. Let us take the world as we find it, in which the Faiths show themselves as a plurality, and then, if they are really one, or many varieties of the same, or if only one is true and the rest false, let the fact appear from the accounts they give of themselves.

On no other terms could full liberty have been accorded to the writers who contribute to the series; on no other terms could the task of editing the series

be fairly carried out. It would have been obviously unfair to demand of each of the contributors that he should exhibit the faith that is in him as ultimately identical with the faith that is in each of his fellow contributors. It would have been obviously unfair to deny to any contributor the right to exhibit his own faith as the only true faith and all the rest as false. It would have been obviously unfair to assume that faith is necessarily singular because St. Paul so describes it. For the degree of authority to be attributed to the words of St. Paul is precisely one of the points on which the contributors to the series must be allowed to differ and to speak for themselves.

The same considerations apply to the sub-title of the series—"Varieties of Christian Expression." It may be that Christianity has only *one* mode of expression, and that it ceases to be Christianity when expressed in any other way. But to take that for granted would ill become the editor of such a series as this, and it would become him still worse if he deliberately planned the series so as to lead up to that conclusion. Again we must take the world as we find it. Among those who claim to be Christians many varieties of expression unquestionably exist which may or may not be only different ways of expressing the same original truth. So far as the editor is concerned this must be left an open question. If to some writers in the series it should seem good to deny the name of Christian to those whose modes of expression differ from their own, they must not be precluded from doing so, and the reader will judge

for himself between the claim and the counter-claim. Certainly the hope is entertained that from the presentation of differences in this series there may emerge some unities hitherto unsuspected or dimly seen; but that will be as it may. The issue is not to be forced.

To present a complete logical justification of our title and sub-title is perhaps not possible, and such justification as we have here offered will probably commend itself only to the pragmatic mind. But objections taken to these titles will be found on examination to be objections to the series itself. How, we might ask, can any earnest and eminent Christian, believing his own variety of Christian expression to be better than the rest, logically justify his co-operation, in such a series as this, with other earnest and eminent Christians whose beliefs in that matter run counter to his own? None the less they are here co-operating.

That such co-operation has been found possible may be reckoned one of the signs of the times. The explanation of it lies, not in logic, but in charity.

L. P. JACKS

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

WHEN in 1923 I published my *Practical Basis of Christian Belief*, I thought that I had finished my series of theological works. But when the editor of the present set of volumes asked me to contribute to it one on Anglican Modernism, I felt that the opportunity ought not to be missed. Modernism is much spoken of, especially in certain Church newspapers, but it is little understood, and any pains taken to set forth its principles in a summary way would not, I felt, be thrown away.

The next question was as to the form the volume should take, the gap into which it should be fitted. A clear and succinct statement of the views of most Modernists is contained in Canon Glazebrook's *Faith of a Modern Churchman* (second, amended edition, 1925) and in another form in the number of the *Modern Churchman* (September 1925) which contains papers read at the Conference at Oxford in 1925. The more concrete and practical side of the Modernist movement is well treated of in Dr. W. M. Pryke's *Modernism as a Working Faith* (Heffer, 1925) and Dr. Sterrett's *Modernism in Religion* (New York, 1922).

What seemed to me now more necessary than a work of this class is a statement of the root-principles of Modernism, and its relation to the great development

which has taken place in our knowledge of history and science. Modernism is at present far less a system of belief than a tendency or a drift away from conventional Christianity towards experience and fact. Thus, though on some points the Modernists are generally agreed, they have reached that position by various routes, and are not always prepared with a reasonable defence of it. Their leaders take very different positions in philosophy, and some do not dig deeply enough for their foundations.

In the present work two things are attempted. First, I trace a brief historical sketch of the rise of Modernism in the Roman and English Churches; and second, I give a summary statement of what I conceive to be the critical and psychological groundwork of the movement. To the first of these subjects I devote Chapters I–V of the present work; to the second, Chapters VI–XI. Probably every careful reader will find omissions, or summary statements where he would have wished for more detail: this could not have been avoided without turning a small book into a large one. In reading my proofs for press I have been vividly conscious how often I have merely stated results without indicating how they are reached, or set forth as evident views which few may be willing to allow. I can only plead that I had really no option. And as a palliation I may point out that the book contains little which I have not set out in more detail and with less dogmatism in other works.

The historic criticism which lies at the foundations of Modernism comes from a succession of great scholars,

mostly German, during the last century. It has been a work of immense labour, involving vast learning. And the general results, apart from particular theories, are generally accepted in the Universities of Europe and America.

The philosophic foundations of Modernism are matters of more dispute : and to this subject I propose specially to devote myself in the present work. The position which I advocate is pragmatist or activist. It is kindred to the attitudes of William James in America, and of Bergson and Boutroux in France. The root of it lies in the *Practical Reason* of Kant. The earliest paper of pragmatist philosophy published in America was one by Mr. Charles Peirce in 1878 ; but this paper lay unnoticed until twenty years later, in 1898, Mr. William James directed attention to it. Dr. Schiller's *Humanism* was published in 1903, W. James's *Pragmatism* in 1907, his *Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902. Similar tendencies appeared at about the same time in France, and were shown in religious writings by M. Laberthonnière in *Essais de Philosophie religieuse* (1903), by M. Le Roy in *Dogme et Critique* (1907), and by M. Boutroux in *Science et Religion* (1908).

My own *Exploratio Evangelica*, a pragmatist treatment of Christianity, appeared in 1899, but I had previously (in 1887) published anonymously a book called *Faith and Conduct*, showing the same tendency. It is evident that when an idea is " in the air " it finds independent expression in various countries and churches. From the first my views have grown and

expanded, but they have not greatly changed, and I have applied them in a series of published works to the phenomena of early and present-day Christianity, to the Fourth Gospel and the Pauline Epistles, to the history of the Christian Church, and to the growth of Christian doctrine and ethics.

According to the Papal theologians, Modernist views are the result only of curiosity and pride. Of pride they ought certainly to be good judges: but if curiosity is a vice, what defence can we make of modern science and research? I think, however, that even these theologians may find it useful to have the results of religious perversity set forth in a clear and orderly way.

Mr. J. S. Bezzant, of Ripon Hall, has been good enough to read my proofs, and to make many valuable suggestions. I also owe a debt to Archdeacon Lilley's *Modernism*.

P. G.

September 1926.

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MODERNISM IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE question is often asked, What are the Modernists? And the answer usually given is that they are professed Christians who deny the miraculous element in early Christianity, and throw doubt on many received doctrines of the Church. Such a description does Modernists great injustice. It directs attention merely to their denials, and passes by their positive and constructive side. They deny in order that they may affirm. Perhaps the best definition of Modernism yet given is that of Mrs. Humphrey Ward: "Modernism is the attempt of the modern spirit, acting religiously, to refashion Christianity, not outside, but inside the warm limits of the ancient churches, to secure, not a reduced, but a transformed Christianity."

The appellation Modernist is much disliked by many who really sympathize with religious reform. And not without reason, since many modern movements are frankly irreligious. A modern tendency in ethics is towards laxity in divorce. Modern tendencies in art have given rise to schools which are thoroughly anarchic.

Modern tendencies in advertisement have tended greatly to the destruction of all sense of beauty and fitness. If one could find a substitute for the term Modernism in religion, one would gladly accept it.

Indeed to any lover of the English language the word is in itself repulsive. The Latin word *modernus* and the Greek termination *-ism* do not go together. It is a barbarous hybrid, and it is the invention of the extreme party in the Roman Church. It is no more satisfactory than that other hybrid, Protestantism, or the term Utilitarianism, against which Mill protested, but which he was forced to accept.

In like manner, I think, we shall be obliged for the present to accept the term Modernism, with all its drawbacks. I shall attempt to set forth in this book, first and briefly, the history of Modernism in the Roman and the English Churches, and secondly the principles, philosophic and scientific, on which it is based. The particular views brought forward are naturally my own; but I believe that in a great measure they will represent those of many in England.

There are two sides to the Modernist movement, the historic and the philosophic or psychologic. I will speak briefly of each.

I

A great change has in recent years come over the study of history, which is mainly the result of new views in biology. History has become scientific, and it is regarded, not as a mere chronicle of picturesque events, but as the result of the interplay of tendencies and forces. Of course the great gap between biology and history must always remain, because in history we have to consider, besides the working of forces social and intellectual, the play of human personalities, which is hardly to be measured, and scarcely ever to be foreseen.

We need not dwell long on the historic procedure of Modernism, for in the first place it is simple and clear, and in the second place it has so completely established itself in all places where history is taken seriously, that it needs little defence. Those who attack Modernism often say that this treatment of history is one of the results of the acceptance of the Hegelian philosophy. This is maintained, for example, by Dr. Charles Harris.[1] And no doubt Baur and other German theologians were in a measure influenced by Hegel. I should say that this was a misfortune. It is the Hegelian influence which misled Baur in the direction of megalomania, and caused him to dilute his valuable historic researches with preconceived notions. But we have worn through that phase of the study of history; and it never had much influence on such writers as Lightfoot in England and Duchesne in France. No; the historic bent in Modernism comes entirely from new scientific conceptions of history, and these conceptions come largely from the science of biology. No doubt, from the days of Thucydides onwards, history has been in a measure scientific. But its scientific character has been in our days more firmly established by the introduction into it of the idea of evolution, the idea that history is not wholly, nor even chiefly, the work of a series of striking personalities, who appear on the stage one after another, and direct the course of societies and of civilization.

The influence of biologic method in historic research has been by no means altogether good. If the course of history is regarded too exclusively as the result of the interplay of intellectual and social forces, and the influence of character and personality is disregarded, we not only deprive history of human interest, but also neglect some of the most potent forces which act in it. History can never be in the same degree as biology a natural evolution conditioned by external forces. Great characters like Mohammed and Napoleon have had an unmeasured in-

[1] *Creeds or no Creeds.*

fluence in it. Some writers, like Carlyle and Macaulay, make too much of the individual and picturesque element in history; others like J. R. Seeley and S. R. Gardiner are disposed to minimize it. The line of wise and true thinking is in this, as in so many matters, a mean between extremes.

A century ago the early history of Christianity was regarded by nearly all writers as an abnormal and miraculous series of phenomena. It did not occur to them that Christianity had predisposing causes and was much under the influence of its environment. The whole subject was at the absolute stage. Thus when the notion of scientific history was carried over from profane to sacred events, a great shake was given to all the current views of the Christian origins. The most obvious result was a change in the view of Christian miracle. Miracles had been by modern writers practically eliminated from ancient history, though the ancient writers are full of such marvels. But the elimination of miracle from the history of Christianity, and particularly from the life of the Founder, was a great shock to all the Churches. Schools of compromise naturally arose. Some theologians confined miracle to the time of Christ and the Apostles. It was in time seen that in fact miracle proper plays a very small part in the Gospels. Faith-healing and the casting out of devils were discovered to be in no way outside medical experience. But miracles involving an obvious violation of the laws of matter were rejected by the mass of thoughtful theologians in the case of the Old Testament. And even in the case of the New their number was diminished. If belief in their historicity was still maintained, that belief was kept in a shady corner of the mind. In the time of Paley, miracle was appealed to in proof of the truth of Christianity; now Christians are urged to accept miracle because of their faith in Christ. But of course it is not only the credibility of the miracles of the New Testament which is in question, but the whole view of the history of Christianity from its

origin onwards. There was not in fact any complete breach in the matter of miracle between the Christianity of the Apostolic Age and the next period. In the lives of the Saints the working of miracles went on continuously. And the Roman Church, as everyone knows, accepts the historic character of Christian miracles in all ages, including the present day. Nor is this phenomenon limited to Christianity. Mohammedan saints in North Africa are little accounted of unless popular report credits them with miraculous powers.

Conservative theologians are apt to declare that the rejection of miracle by historians is due to an *à priori* notion of the impossibility of such occurrences. Probably such a motive for their rejection is dominant in the minds of many of those trained in physical science. But the historian as such does not eliminate miracle as intrinsically impossible. He would say with Huxley that he would accept any apparent miracle reported in history if there were adequate evidence in its favour. But it has been shown conclusively that the evidence in the case of miracles properly so called always on close investigation turns out to be inadequate.

The new conception of history has been greatly enforced by the process of literary criticism. Ever since the Renaissance, learned scholars have been at work on the productions of Greek and Roman authors. On one side there has been grammatical and textual criticism, comparing manuscripts, and trying to recover the original text of the ancient writers. On the other side there has been what is called (in a phrase often misunderstood) the higher criticism, which investigates the circumstances of the production of each work, its origin and its relation to the intellectual life of the time. This classical criticism has gone so thoroughly into the questions of ancient literature, that unless fresh works are discovered it may almost be said to have exhausted the field.

By a natural and inevitable process, this learned and

acute criticism has passed from the literature of Greece and Rome to that of the Jews, and to the books of the New Testament. There are more conservative and more advanced schools of criticism, schools which concern themselves only with minutiæ of the text and discard higher criticism, and schools which are mainly concerned with the latter, and are often anything but conservative. As a smaller stream flows into a great river and adds to its volume, so the results of Biblical and Patristic criticism have reinforced the great movement in historic study of which I have spoken.

It must be confessed that the results of the extension of the scientific notion of history to the region of early Christianity have been up to now rather destructive than constructive. They have rendered impossible to thoughtful men many of the traditional views on the subject, but writers have not been able to set forth in their place a generally recognized scheme of early Christian history. We may discern on various sides some approach to such a scheme ; but the differences between researchers in this field are still striking. Some day a great genius may succeed in setting the Gospel history on a firm and permanent basis ; but meantime we have to move with caution, and to recognize the truth of Jowett's saying, that the secret of the Christian life cannot depend upon learned researches in Christian literature and history.

But there is another and a far more cheering side to research in Christian history. The " quest of the historic Jesus " has been carried out both in England and in Germany with the utmost energy and talent. And, in spite of the divergence one from another of the various seekers, there has come out more and more clearly the figure of the great Founder ; the main features of His life and doctrine have become more and more vivid. The piety of the Church has so far altered the form of Jesus, has insisted so strongly on His divine and superhuman character, that His humanity has often been almost lost

sight of. Idealism in His portrayal has been so triumphant that the real man has been hidden, the man who walked the soil of Palestine, who was not merely a teacher sent from God, but a man of strong human affections, subject to fits of exaltation and depression, burning with a passionate love for His fellow-men, subject to temptation by the powers of evil, yet without yielding to them, never swerving from His mission, which He pursued to the bitter end on the cross, yet no pale and passionless hero, but one dyed with all feeling and emotion. In the midst of His weary wanderings He had time to call and to bless little children, to be filled with passionate admiration of the widow who cast her mite into the treasury. It is evident that He was greatly delighted with the simple scenes of nature, birds and flowers, clouds crossing the sky, the corn rising in the fields. In the midst of the Fourth Gospel, which is the least naturalistic picture of Him, we find the simple words "Jesus wept". At the end of the same Gospel we have the pathetic question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"

It is this human side of the Saviour which it is the merit of modern historic study to have brought out more clearly, and to have freed from the wrappings of ages. The teaching also recent study has set in a clearer light, so that its brilliance has greatly increased. Its originality has become more evident, as it has been with full knowledge compared with the contemporary teaching of Judæa and of Greece. Such works as *Ecce Homo*, Robertson's *Sermons*, Abbott's *Philochristus*, Glover's *Jesus of History*, were made possible by the historic work of recent years. An appreciation of the humanity and the ethics of Jesus is not in itself enough to produce the highest type of Christian, but it is effective in bringing men to the foot of the cross, and inspiring the love which is on the way to the worship of the Eternal Christ.

Another personality of the early Church, second only in importance to Jesus Himself, St. Paul, has been made

infinitely clearer and more real to us by works which have shown the circumstances of his time, the life of the great cities of Europe and Asia, the clashings of the Jewish and the Hellenic spirit. We have learned to regard him not merely as a great doctor of the Church, but as a profoundly original genius, drawing inspiration from a divine source, baptizing into Jesus what was best in the Hellenistic world, adapting Christianity to the conditions of the world as it was. Truly there are compensations for us in historic study; and the somewhat chilling pressure of strictly scientific history is modified and relieved by the enthusiasm still kindled by the personalities of the Gospels and Epistles.

II

On the side of doctrine or dogma also there are obstacles for the modern spirit to surmount. The majority of thoughtful churchgoers feel that the statements embodied in creeds and articles of belief are full of difficulty, partly because they are very hard to understand, and partly because when they are in a measure understood, they seem archaic and quite out of relation to the facts of the religious life. People accept and repeat these formulæ out of respect for authority; but they do not feel that some of the assertions of the creeds have much to do with practical Christianity. Knowing little of ancient or scholastic philosophy, they find its expressions strange and unmeaning. They long for a translation of them into a language which can be understood.

The discussion of Modernism from the philosophic point of view is far more difficult to follow than that from the historic point of view. It must necessarily involve difficult mental conceptions, and especially the contrast of objective and subjective and of absolute and relative, which are necessarily fundamental in all philosophic theory.

The tendency of historic criticism is in the first instance destructive, in showing many current views to be no longer

maintainable. But the tendency of philosophic and psychologic investigation is usually constructive, showing what realities lie at the base of religious beliefs ; explaining the relation of these latter to the permanent facts of the human mind. The Modernist schools attempt—and this striking feature they have in common—to place religious belief above the threatening storms of scientific and historic criticism, and to find for it some more trustworthy basis than mere authority, the respect for which has greatly decayed under modern conditions. The Modernist object has been, not to attack absolute religion from the relative point of view, but to find a means of reconciling absolute and relative ways of regarding religion. When one approaches Christianity from the side of history and science, the relative point of view forces itself upon one. But when one approaches it from the side of conduct, of emotion, even of philosophy, the absolute point of view is in a measure necessary. The difficulty is to determine how far each point of view is necessary and legitimate, and how collision between the two may be avoided. Here, of course, serious thinkers will take different lines. In my opinion the activist line is by far the best.

Recent writers on the philosophy of Christianity in Germany, notably Troeltsch and Eucken, though they belong essentially to the relativist camp, have been quite convinced that we must not give up the absolute point of view in religion. Troeltsch wrote an important work to enforce the absolute point of view, which he has since modified, and Eucken in his book on *Christianity and the New Idealism* unhesitatingly maintains it. He dreads subjectivity and mere individualism as much as do the Roman Catholic theologians such as Ehrhard, with whom individualism is a constant bugbear.

In England also there is the same feeling in the liberal camp. Baron F. von Hügel was a close ally of the German writers whom I have mentioned. Dean Rashdall maintained the absoluteness of Christianity, as do Dr. Matthews

in London and some American writers. But all these, German and English, seek for a reconciliation between absoluteness and relativity by the way of thought. Dean Inge seeks it by way of mysticism.

The truth is that all Christian writers who approach the subject of the truth of their religion by way of philosophy are sure to feel that man needs in religion an objective certainty which is in a sense absolute. And they find it in one way or another. Usually they do not fall back on *à priori* metaphysics, which in our day can scarcely be revived, but they are able to find in the constancy of the facts of mind, which remain almost unchanged from age to age, a basis for assertions in regard to God and the moral law which do not seem to become obsolete with time, and so escape the danger of relativity.

It thus appears that some form of absolute religion is necessary for the human spirit, but that such absoluteness is very difficult to arrive at by those who have mainly concerned themselves with the history of Christianity, and more difficult still for the students of comparative religion. Yet in one way or another it has to be reached.

Modernism is an attempt at such a synthesis. A hundred books have been written as endeavours to modernize Christianity by placing it on terms with present-day thought and knowledge. In the form of an attempted reconcilement between religion and science it comes before us daily in books, in magazines and even in newspapers. Among the many species of such reconciliation, Modernism has special qualities of its own.

In the first place, it belongs to the churches. All Modernist writers, in England or on the Continent, are strongly attached to visible and organized churches. They are not content with the somewhat crude attempt so widely made to prove that religion is compatible with our knowledge of the physical and the human world. They seek for a reconciliation of science with Christianity as a definite faith; and further with Christianity as an

historical process and an institutional form of religion. The French Modernists, as one soon discovers on reading them, are devotedly attached to the Roman Church, and scarcely seem to regard any other form of Christianity as of any value. The English Modernists are not, naturally, so exclusive in their affections, but most of them look on the English Church as a dear mother, to separate themselves from whom would be extremely painful. Thus Modernists must not be regarded only as embodying a tendency in religious thought, but as a branch of the Christian vine which claims close relations with the stem.

The history of Modernism in the English Church is largely within my own knowledge, since I was at Cambridge a pupil of Maurice and Kingsley and Lightfoot and of the author of *Ecce Homo*, and I have ever since watched the growth of the movement with tense interest. But on the other hand the Modernists in England have never been a distinct set of men. Some degree of Modernism has been accepted by clergy and laity in each of the three sections of the Church, but very few have been thoroughgoing or have followed the trail to the end. Nor have they, with a few exceptions, set forth in clear and logical form the grounds of their belief. The average Broad Churchman accepts what he can of current doctrine, and rejects only that which he cannot assimilate. No pronouncement on the subject has ever been made by the Ecclesiastical Courts, which indeed consist of laymen who would find the utmost difficulty in forming an opinion on the matter, and would if appealed to probably give the reply of Gallio.

It has been said, and truly said, that Modernism is a tendency rather than a school. And in fact the tendency appears in two forms. There are writers who carry on the liberal Protestant tradition, and are much influenced by the great critics of Germany, Harnack especially, most of whose works can be read in English. And there are writers who are more akin to the French Modernists, who

strongly stress the mission of the Church, and are anxious to preserve as much as possible of traditional doctrine and ritual, only shifting the base of it from history to psychology; as Amiel says: "The need of our age is the translation of religion from the historic to the psychologic basis"; and as Archbishop Temple wrote: "Our theology has been cast in a scholastic mould. We are in need of, and being gradually forced into, a theology based on psychology. The transition, I fear, will not be without much pain; but nothing can prevent it".

I propose to trace in outline the growth of Anglican Modernism along three lines:—

(1) Biblical and historical criticism.
(2) Philosophic and psychologic views.
(3) Appreciation of the Church.

Under the first two heads it will be impossible to keep the views of leaders in the English Church rigidly apart from those of eminent men in other branches of the Church, especially the Presbyterians of Scotland. Under the third head the special views of Anglican leaders will naturally be more prominent and distinctive.

It will be best not to adhere closely to chronological order, or to speak much of the personal characteristics of writers; it is a process rather than schools that we shall have to consider.

CHAPTER II

MODERNISM AND CHURCH HISTORY

I HAVE already observed that the influence of the growth of historic criticism on current religious views has been in a measure destructive. However possible it may be to reconcile evolutional views in history with essential Christianity, they have hitherto seemed to be hostile to the religion of the churches and the people, as tending to eliminate from it the supernatural element, and greatly to diminish the value of authority. Yet historic criticism of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, and of the early history of Christianity, has been let loose among us, and has become more and more severe, and more and more effective. It has grown into a mighty stream, which overthrows all the feeble barriers which conservative theologians have from time to time erected, so that most men wonder whether it will ever reach a limit.

I

The battle between historic science and purely supernatural religion was fought out in Scotland within the memory of many still living. Robertson Smith, a Professor in the Free Church College, Aberdeen, was accused of heresy before the Consistory on account of views which he had published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in regard to the date and origin of the books of the Old Testament.

He defended himself with vigour, maintaining that his views were not inconsistent with a belief in the inspiration of the Bible. After endless wrangling, which went on for years, he was ejected in 1881. Cambridge received him with open arms, and he is now regarded as one of the greatest authorities on the religion of the Semitic peoples. Opinion among the Scottish clergy has greatly changed in half a century: and at present any such prosecution as that of Robertson Smith would be quite out of date, though it is not impossible even to-day in Tennessee.

In England Dr. Driver was the most important figure in the last century in Old Testament Criticism. His strength was that he was historic merely, and did not stay to explain the result of his conclusions on the faith of the Church. He also rigorously abstained from similar criticism of the New Testament, on the ground that the conditions of its production were entirely different. To this caution more than to anything else it was due that he was not regarded, after the first, as heterodox. It seemed possible to accept an evolutionary view as regards the Jewish scriptures, which were written over a long period of time, and to deny it as regards the New Testament which was all written within half a century. Such a distinction was accepted by Bishop Gore in *Lux Mundi*, though he has of late given up the view. And it has in fact been so generally accepted by ordinary people, that even extreme views on the origin and composition of the books of the Hebrew Bible pass without much difficulty in the teaching of the young. The case is otherwise on the Continent and in America, where the Bible is regarded more as a unit, and where rigid doctrines of Biblical inspiration are still held in the more conservative quarters.

And in fact the distinction between criticism of the Old and criticism of the New Testament is one which is quite unmaintainable. It is not a question of shorter or longer periods in history, but of evidence, and the action of the human mind in the field of religion. Whatever

views are held as to the inspiration of the Old Testament must also be held in the case of the New. Indeed some of the books of the Jewish canon, notably some of the Psalms, are so important to the religious life that we are obliged to allow them an inspiration not less lofty in character than that of some parts of the New Testament. The Psalms pass in popular estimation as the work of David. And in fact one Psalm is cited as by David by the Saviour Himself. But criticism has decided that the Psalms are of various periods, some of them as late as the Maccabean and possibly as the Roman age. We can scarcely imagine a lecturer on the Psalms reverting to the old view. Yet through the whole history of the Church the Psalms have been a never-ending source of religious belief and consolation. Their religious value has shaken itself free from the question of their date and school. And when the Psalms are recited in church, a rough attempt is made to Christianize them by adding at the end of each a Christian doxology, which often fits on in a curiously incongruous way. They are baptized into Christ in a somewhat clumsy fashion.

In recent years the criticism of the New Testament has grown much bolder, both among the laity and among the clergy. It has not been confined to any particular body of Christians, but it has been especially noteworthy among the Presbyterians of Scotland and the Nonconformist clergy.

During the last half-century, book after book has made its appearance in Europe and America, containing some new and extreme view as regards the history of the Christian origins. These works, if learned and well-written, have constantly made a stir. They have been welcomed by coteries of disciples as *epoch-making*, and as rendering valueless all before written on their particular subject. They have been regarded with fear and trembling by the partisans of institutional religion and by conservative theologians; and youths at a susceptible age are sometimes

disposed to think that they make hay of Christian belief. The phenomenon, however, has become so familiar to us, that we ought to recover our balance of mind, and not give way to nervousness and panic.

It is clear that the rhythmic character which is prominent in all the processes of nature, and in politics, and in all the phenomena of human life, belongs also to religious and to Biblical criticism. A new theory is started by some young theologian, often from a German University. Its influence comes like a rolling wave. A number of young men, who are eager for novelty, grasp it with avidity, and say that it is only the old stick-in-the-muds who do not believe in it. It spreads, as fashion in dress spreads, because few are courageous enough to dispute it. In another branch of learning in which I have had long experience, classical archæology, exactly the same course of events takes place. A new theory if well stated by a man of some mark, is bound to have a run, whether calculated for permanence or not. Presently the new theory is displaced in the learned world by a still newer. Then men of experience begin to consider what is the actual basis in fact of the newly superseded theory. In the great majority of cases it has such a basis ; but the mischief is that the superstructure is often quite out of proportion to it. It is recognized as top-heavy, as partial and one-sided ; and it recedes into the background, leaving usually, unless it is merely built in the air, a certain residuum to be built into the growing edifice of knowledge. The more consistent—and therefore, in most cases, one-sided—a view is, the more rapid will be its spread and the more complete its downfall.

Of course really great theories arise and spread in the same way ; but being based upon more solid foundations they hold their own with time, and yield a larger result to ordered knowledge or historic science.[1]

[1] We suffer much in England from the narrow use of the word science, which among us is usually restricted to the physical and

We may best illustrate this rhythmic growth of science by an instance or two taken from the history of Biblical criticism in Germany. A great impulse was given to it in the middle of the last century by F. C. Baur, who proposed as a key to all the early history of the Church, the conflict between the Jewish and the Hellenistic influences in it, between the teaching of the original apostles and that of Paul. And this was certainly a *vera causa*, as no one who has considered the Pauline Epistles can doubt. But Baur and the Tübingen school carried the view to an absurd length. Instead of trying to explain by it the course of events which really took place, they constructed out of the documents a history specially made to fit into the corners of the theory. Hence a reaction, which went so far that in many quarters the name of Baur, a name very honourable in Biblical Criticism, became almost a byword of scorn. Recent sane criticism has done justice to Baur, while rejecting his extravagances.

In 1911 an American scholar, Mr. W. B. Smith, published in Germany a work called *Ecce Deus*, the object of which was to prove that Jesus was not a historic character at all, but a creation of the Christian consciousness of the first century, on the basis of a divine being recognized by the Jews outside Palestine, and derived from Oriental sources. Smith found a few supporters among learned writers; but the great majority of theologians rejected his theory with decision; in fact it is entirely impossible to anyone properly trained in historic method.

Scarcely less extravagant in my opinion is the attempt of J. Weiss and Albert Schweitzer to find the key to all the teaching of Jesus in His belief in a visible divine Kingdom soon to be founded in the world, whence all

biologic fields. This restriction is confined, so far as I know, to the English language. In French, German and other languages the term science is used more properly as applying to all ordered and reasoned knowledge, whether of physical or mental or historic matters. Our English restriction has, I fear, unfortunate results.

His ethical teaching is to be regarded as only temporary, adapted to a society which was to pass away shortly. That Jesus held such a view cannot easily be denied; but that it formed the basis of His mentality is quite another thing. Fortunately for us Schweitzer went on to apply the same key to the Epistles of St. Paul, and to maintain that he too was completely dominated by a belief in a near catastrophe which was to change the whole fabric of society, and bring in a new frame of things. I say "fortunately" because the Epistles of St. Paul are familiar to most of us, and we can satisfactorily judge how much in the air is Schweitzer's interpretation of them. The views of Schweitzer, though sponsored in England by Professor Burkitt, have not convinced most theologians, though all feel that Schweitzer has done good service in calling fresh attention to one side of the teaching of Jesus. In the same way Dr. Cheyne among ourselves has carried to extravagant lengths his special views as to the origins of Jewish beliefs, and caused a temporary reaction.

Writers like Cheyne, Smith and Schweitzer are irresponsible skirmishers in front of the array of sober criticism. But we have very satisfactory books in English, which show how far the main body of Biblical critics has advanced; such are the *Introductions* of Jülicher, Moffatt and Peake, works full of moderation and good sense, admirable correctives of nervous dread and unreasonable despondency in the ordinary Christian.

The growth of criticism of the New Testament and the early history of Christianity has been a recent development. It would not, therefore, be easy or desirable to mention names of Germans and Englishmen, of Anglicans, Presbyterians and Nonconformists who have been most effective in this field. Many of them are still living, and their selection would be a very invidious task. But a few great Churchmen of the last generation seem to demand at least a passing mention. At Oxford three names are most prominent, those of Benjamin Jowett, Edwin Hatch

and William Sanday. Hatch's works on *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, and on *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, have become classical, not only in England, but also in Germany. Hatch was never properly appreciated in his University; he wore out his life in business and routine instead of in the work of research and exposition for which he was admirably qualified, and he did not live until old age. Jowett struck the keynote of modern Biblical criticism in his thesis, "Before we can make the Old and New Testaments a real part of education, we must read them, not by the help of custom or tradition, in the spirit of apology or controversy, but in accordance with the ordinary laws of human knowledge"; and it was in accordance with this thesis that he wrote his commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Romans, Galatians and Thessalonians. At the same time he had not much sympathy with historic and archæological work, which alone can fit a writer to carry out his principle. Sanday gave an admirable example of steady and persistent search for truth in history, a search which led him in the end to break away from his earlier associates, and to pass over into the Modernist camp. At Cambridge figures of like power and dignity were Lightfoot and Hort, who did not indeed so openly leave the trodden ways, but yet—the latter especially—gave a great impetus to the movement for treating the early history of Christianity in the same judicial manner in which the histories of Greece and Rome are studied in modern Universities. J. R. Seeley, though a professor of history at Cambridge, was really by nature rather a critic and a litterateur than a theologian, and did not seriously take up the study of Biblical history. His friend E. A. Abbott was far more thoroughgoing, indeed his works are so detailed as to repel the ordinary student. The influence of such men has been deep and far-reaching, so that lectures in the Universities on the Bible and early Christianity have completely changed in character. Even

the great German theologians who in the last century were held in horror are now freely appealed to in the lecture-room. It is only in some of the Anglican theological colleges that the extreme supernatural view of Christianity keeps its place.

At a more practical level, great influence on the religious views of ordinary men was exercised by the *Sermons* of Robertson of Brighton. He was not a learned critic, but he was strongly under the influence of the great religious currents which were setting in in the Victorian age. The sermons are disconnected and discursive; but they are the utterances of an intensely religious nature, fully alive to the values set forth by the Evangelical School, but free from their narrow limitations. In the sixties and seventies of the last century they greatly stirred thoughtful young men, and were read with delight by tens of thousands. Even now their influence has not passed away. They did much to prepare the soil in which Modernism took root. Pfleiderer says of them, "There is little in homiletical literature to compare with them, in respect of wealth and depth of thought, strength of moral pathos, warmth of religious emotion, clearness and vividness of style, and elevation and beauty of language". They stirred the depths of Christian thought in a remarkable degree.

II

Certain things are clear in regard to the influence of the research into Christian origins.

In the first place, it is certain that nothing can stop the steady working of criticism in the field of early Christian history. The methods of historic study are far too deeply founded, they are established by far too great an induction, to be rejected or even essentially modified. Particular theories we may reject, but the stem on which they grew remains. This is especially clear from the life

of Mgr. Duchesne. An ardent lover of the Roman Church, one who hated to be thought heretical, and disclaimed the title of Modernist, he was yet compelled by his scientific conscience to adhere in his history of early Christianity to the same rules of procedure and the same canons of evidence as were used by all the recent great writers on the history of ancient nations. As a result, his work was by the Roman Curia placed on the Index, though he managed by submission to escape the fate of Loisy and Tyrrell. To attempt to apply to sacred history a different procedure from that used in profane history, would in our day be as hopeless a proceeding as to try to work out views in physical science which would not be inconsistent with the early chapters of Genesis, and the geocentric views of the Mediæval Church. It is a course parallel to that of Mrs. Partington with the Atlantic.

Much dispute has arisen in recent times in regard to the historicity of the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of the Saviour. Modernists have been greatly abused for calling these in question. Their reply is that if they believe in the Incarnation, and the continued life of Christ in the Church, they should be allowed to sit loose to the exact manner in which the Saviour entered into the world and departed from it. They know that on these subjects there were several different views in the early Church, and the fact that one among these views found its place in the Creeds does not seem to them final. If even Scripture is not infallible, certainly the Creeds cannot claim to be so. Without believing in a strictly miraculous birth of the Saviour, they can believe all that St. Paul believed in regard to Him.

But the question as to these two Gospel miracles fades into unimportance compared with the question which now looms largest in the eyes of Christians, the question in regard to the character of the Fourth Gospel. We may take this problem first from the side of historic criticism. The author and the date of it are much disputed; but

critics seem agreed that it comes from Ephesus. How far it embodies traditions of the life of Christ, and how much of it is intentional allegory are matters of doubt. But this much is clear, and indeed is obvious to every intelligent reader, that the great figure which it portrays is not the same figure as is presented in the Synoptic Gospels. If Jesus spoke in the manner in which these Gospels represent Him as speaking, He cannot have spoken in the way of the Fourth Gospel. If the Synoptists give us a true picture, the picture in the Fourth Gospel is highly idealized.

The conclusion towards which Biblical criticism seems to be steadily approaching is that the Synoptic Gospels, though by no means infallible, do give us a trustworthy view both of the daily life and the method of teaching of the Saviour; but that the author of the Fourth Gospel mingles with some traditions of the life so much which belongs to the Christian consciousness of the half-century after the crucifixion, that it must be regarded rather as a great religious document, a noble work of mysticism, than as a biography properly so called. This is the view which I have maintained in my little work, *The Ephesian Gospel*; of course it is one which may be held with many variations.

No doubt many generations of Christians have found in this Gospel the words of life and of salvation, and many are most unwilling to believe that these words did not come from the lips of the Saviour during His earthly career. But after all they need not greatly change their ground. If the inimitable discourses of the Gospel were not uttered in Jerusalem, we may hold them to have been founded on revelation by the Spirit of Christ to a prophet of the rising Church. They do not record verbatim the utterances of the Saviour, but we cannot take even the Sermon on the Mount as a precise report of words actually spoken. In the Fourth Gospel we read: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are

life." They are not statements of mere fact, but words which meet the active spirits of the hearers, and kindle in them an earnest desire for heavenly things. They are not only a draught of water from a heavenly source, but in the believer a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.

As Scripture, when used in an activist[1] way, seems independent of time and place, so do the doctrines which were evolved in the Christian consciousness in the first ages of the Church. Regarded as a mere intellectual scheme, they suffer from many imperfections: they had to be expressed in the intellectual forms of the age, and as those forms change they may become fanciful and unreal. And there were many other disturbing factors, political and social, and even personal, in their formulation, since it was through striking personalities that they became dominant. But as an imperfect record of the Christian life, they were of infinite service, and deserve of us, not a blind acceptance, but the most careful study and appreciation.

It is, however, clear that historic criticism is inconsistent with the complacent orthodoxy of the past. It cannot allow an infallible Bible, nor a verbally inspired one. It cannot allow that Jesus in His life on earth remained omniscient and omnipotent God. It cannot accept as historic events miracles which imply a violation of the established laws of the physical world, not from any *à priori* notion that miracles are impossible, but merely because all historic research shows that when the evidence for miracle is closely investigated it proves inadequate. It cannot allow that the assemblies of the Church, however full of the spirit of the Founder, were always right in their views or wise in their decisions. In a word, it is inconsistent with any intellectual scheme of absolute religion, of religion reduced to formulæ and then claiming to stand above all questioning.

[1] An explanation of what I mean by the term activist I must leave to a later chapter.

But the danger to faith from historic criticism disappears if we look on Scripture and Creeds in another light, not as authoritative documents to be accepted under penalty and placed above criticism, but as appealing to the Christian conscience. On the ordinary believer passages of Scripture take effect not in proportion to their authenticity, nor as promulgated by particular writers, but as accepted by the heart and by faith. Such passages are usually taken out of their connection, and in fact very imperfectly understood, but they stir the emotions and urge the will. They have behind them an immense force accumulated by the experience of Christians through ages, and often hidden in the unconscious part of our personality. When regarded in this activist light, the historic questions of authorship, of date, of original intention, become otiose. They belong to the realm of science, not to that of personal religion.

Nor is this activist view proper only to individuals. Churches, as organized societies of individuals, have a right to derive doctrines from the New Testament, and to formulate them for the guidance of their members. But in doing so the Churches cannot escape from the influence of the surrounding intellectual conditions. There must be temporary and distracting influences in their action. If they lay down too rigid and dogmatic formulæ, or if they try to enforce them with too oppressive an energy, they will be sure to suffer for it. When doctrine as formulated by a Church hardens into dogma, and when dogma is beaten into strictly systematic forms, the force of religious inspiration is sure sooner or later to burst the bonds of system and to revolt.

There are doubtless many to whom historic criticism will seem to have taken away the grounds of their belief. They will say with Mary, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him". Such people often are most sincere and excellent Christians. I do not see why, since historic criticism demands training and leisure, they should concern themselves with it at

all. It seems wise for them to rest their belief so far as they are able, not on history, but on religious experience. They will say, " I know in whom I have believed " ; and no one can dispute the testimony of the spirit within them. If one can climb to new and broader views of the meaning of Christianity, the prospect is wider and nobler than from a narrower standing-point. But it can only be attained by labour and pain ; and those who cannot reach it need not suffer in their religion, but only in the scientific value of their views. Where they are often wrong is not in their affirmations, but in their denials. They often regard those who do not accept the views of prevalent orthodoxy as unfaithful to Christianity, and even deny to them the name of Christian. Perhaps this exclusiveness may be the defect of their qualities, and excusable from their narrow point of view. But it is not a thing to give way to. St. Paul also suffered from persecution by the Judaizing Christians, who criticized his Christian liberty, and his answer to them was emphatic—" To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour ".

CHAPTER III

MODERNISM AND PHILOSOPHY

WE have next to speak of the development of Modernist thought, of philosophy and psychology in relation to theology. We can scarcely expect to find in our own country parallels to the vast speculative systems of the German philosophers, or to the thoroughly logical schemes of the French Modernists. The genius of our nation runs rather in the direction of action than of thought; it is disposed to have more regard for fact than for theory; it prefers a working compromise to an intellectual construction. Locke and Butler are our most characteristic thinkers. The tendency of the Scottish mind is somewhat different; abstract philosophy is more at home in Edinburgh than in Oxford and Cambridge, though Scottish thinkers gain followers in the south. When German philosophy gains a vogue in England, it is in a somewhat changed and diluted form.

I

Those who wish for a critical account of the recent changes in the philosophic view of theology in England since 1825, will hardly do better than read the chapters on the subject (pp. 303–401) in Pfleiderer's *Development of Theology in Germany and England*. Whatever be thought of Pfleiderer's views as to the Pauline Epistles, he was a man of extraordinary width of reading and force

of mind, and almost as well acquainted with the English language and literature as with those of his own country. His book gives a penetrating philosophic survey of the subject, and the parallels which he draws between writers and movements in England and those in Germany are singularly enlightening.

Neither my space nor my reading will allow me to produce a complete work of this kind; I can but draw a few rough outlines.

In England there has long been a great gap between the religious views of the highly educated and those of the generality of Christians. Deplorable as this fact may be, it seems inevitable. The progress of reasoned thought reminds us of the gradual disappearance of the Flood. First a few lofty summits show above the water, then lower hills, and at last the plains. Movements in the Universities and in the towns by no means keep step together; sometimes illumination spreads from the few to the many; sometimes a great popular movement only reacts after some time on the seats of learning.

I need not carry back my sketch beyond the beginning of the nineteenth century; before that, any trace of Modernism is hardly to be discovered. In the first half of that century Oriel College, Oxford, had the honour of giving birth to two strongly contrasted movements; one was that of Newman and Pusey in the direction of the revival of mediæval Christianity, the other was that of the Oxford Noetics, as they were called, men who tried to bring into religion and Christianity a fresh stream of reason. Their names are not so well known as those of the Puseyite party, but their work was not less important. Some account of them may be found in Tuckwell's *Pretractarian Oxford*. The most powerful intellects among them were Whateley and Copleston, both of whom afterwards became bishops, and who exercised at Oxford a compelling influence upon younger men. Hampden and Baden Powell, a distinguished man of science, also belonged

to the group. But the most influential and best known of them was Thomas Arnold, whose head-mastership at Rugby is a great landmark in the history of English education. Arnold died in middle life; had he lived longer and resided at Oxford, the course of the ritualist revival might have been greatly modified. His pupils, though they were prominent in many departments of active life, did not form a school of theology. Arnold, himself, a devoted admirer of Niebuhr, worked rather on religious history than on religious theory.

But whereas the influence of the Puseyite School spread before long to the theological seminaries and thence through the activity of devoted clergymen to the great centres of population, the influence of the Noetics only spread beyond the Universities through their writings; and in fact their strongly intellectual tendencies did not stir the people, nor even the mass of the more educated. If we are in search of the writings which tended to transform educated and literary circles, and to prepare the ground for the coming of a more reasonable and wider form of Christianity, we must turn to some of the great lay writers of the Victorian age, an age of more brilliant literary development than any which had preceded it, with the possible exception of the age of Shakespeare. There arose a great galaxy of writers, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Carlyle, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, Browning and others, who brought the broader aspects of religion into all the homes where thought and culture were appreciated.

Writers who attained among English liberals to a far greater vogue than the Noetics were Coleridge and Carlyle. Neither was a theologian, and neither was a systematic thinker; but they had a great influence on English mentality, and paved the way for a liberal movement in theology. Both no doubt drank deeply from German wells—Kant, Schleiermacher and Goethe were to them great masters; but they put things in a

way quite different, and more adapted to the English mind.

Coleridge made much of the distinction between reason, and reasoning or the understanding. The understanding he regarded as concerned only with the world of sense, and so dealing only with conditional judgments; where it strayed into the field of spiritual realities, it became often a mere faculty of unreason, though it was useful as a negative canon, in rejecting what was altogether inadmissible. But reason was in accord with the moral and spiritual nature of man, and was a faculty of intuition in regard to universal and necessary truths. It is thus not merely the *practical* reason of Kant but something more. Coleridge applies his canon to such doctrines as those of original sin and inspiration, detaching them from history and seeking their explanation in human nature. So in regard to Scripture, while he rejects anything like infallibility or mere passive inspiration, he maintains that it is an invaluable storehouse of doctrine; it is the *spirit* of Scripture, not the words and sentences, which is infallible and absolute. It is evident that Coleridge felt strongly the religious tide which was setting in the direction of Modernism. There is no doubt that he had great influence on thoughtful men; but it is doubtful whether we gain much by calling the reason a faculty of intuition. We run the risk of great confusion by separating the kindred words reason and reasoning; the use of the German word *Vernunft* does not lead to this confusion.

The great influence exerted by Thomas Carlyle was not due to his religious views, which were vague and indefinite, but to the rugged honesty and splendid downrightness of the man. His style too, neither elegant nor polished, was extremely efficient because of its novelty and force. He hated formulæ, of which he spoke as the mere clothes of reality. And it would be difficult to extract from his works any formula of belief. But there was in him a noble survival of the spirit of the Scottish Covenanters;

and belief in God and duty was the kernel of his being. It is somewhat strange that he should have been so fascinated by Goethe, who belongs to quite another type of mind.

More directly bearing on Christian belief was J. R. Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, a work which was discussed in workshops and on the top of omnibuses, and which had an enormous vogue in the sixties. It is not written on the basis of any logical principles of criticism; but its ethical fervour won its way to the hearts of multitudes. Its portrait of Jesus as an inspired philanthropist shows a definitely English point of view, as compared with the French sentimentalist of Renan and the German philosopher of Strauss. Seeley's later work, *Natural Religion*, shows more matured thought, but it lacks the fervour and spontaneity of *Ecce Homo*, and so had nothing like equal vogue among the young.

But, beyond doubt, the greatest influence in the last century in the direction of liberalism in religion was Matthew Arnold. He exercised a great attraction on thoughtful minds; and his style was extremely persuasive and even fascinating. He constantly disclaimed any philosophic system, saying that he had not the faculty for abstract thought. Nor was this merely Socratic irony; Arnold had felt so strongly the unsatisfactory character of systems of doctrine, that he went to the opposite extreme, and would only accept doctrinal statements as phrases thrown out at great truths which could not be enclosed in words, so that inconsistencies between them did not appear to him fatal. But he moved also in another direction under the stress of the modern spread of science and desire for realities in belief. He thought that his definitions of God, as the Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness, or again as the stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being, had scientific value, being confirmed by experience. So, too, he defined religion as morality touched by emotion. Many critics

have disputed the accuracy of these definitions, and tried to convict them of containing *à priori* elements. But for my part I think them of great value, not perhaps strictly as scientific formulæ, but as phrases thrown out at the great overpowering realities of the spiritual life. They do admit, in a measure, of verification by experience. A certain resemblance has been found between the views of Arnold and those of Professor Harnack; and the way they trace is one of the most satisfactory of recent attempts to find a skeleton of fact for the body of liberal theology. The most remarkable thing about Arnold, however, is neither his doctrines nor his style, but his wonderful power of insight, one of the rarest of faculties. Where most men see only the surface of a movement or a teacher, he sees right through the surface to the depths.

It is difficult for the young of this generation fully to understand the extraordinary influence exercised in the mid-Victorian age by the writings of Carlyle, as well as by the art-teaching of Ruskin, and the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson. It is certain, however, that most young men of ability came under that influence. For example, Professor Henry Sidgwick, one of the coolest and most impartial heads of his time, used to speak of *In Memoriam* in most enthusiastic terms. During his lifetime Browning was by many or most people regarded as a greater poet from the religious point of view than Tennyson. But it is very doubtful whether posterity will take this view. Browning's extreme optimism is a weakness rather than a merit; and Tennyson shows greater power of thought, and a closer knowledge of science and nature.

The writers I have mentioned, and others of the same class, produced in many intelligent circles a type of religion like that called by the Germans ethical idealism, an optimistic attitude towards human progress, with a strong admiration for the good, the beautiful and the true. There was not much definite or systematic thought in the movement, but a great ethical and æsthetic expan-

sion. The writers could not be called Modernists in religion, yet beyond doubt they prepared the soil for the seeds of Modernism.

Meantime there was converging on the history and the belief of Christianity, light thrown from many sides. Investigations in biology, anthropology, history, psychology had begun rapidly to modify the whole intellectual atmosphere, so that the ordinary Christian orthodoxy both in Catholic and Protestant Churches grew more and more faint, and out of relation to modern needs and modern thought. It is not that such orthodoxy was definitely refuted, but that it came to appear antiquated and impossible. As in the poem of Shelley, " Faiths and Empires gleam like wrecks of a dissolving dream ". If in our times the Christian spirit has lost its originating and organizing power, Christianity must decay and pass. If the Christian spirit is still alive and powerful it must find for itself a new body, or, as Carlyle would say, new clothes, not necessarily in the latest fashion, but of a kind suitable for continued work in the world.

II

The book which has had most force in changing our mental outlook in religion is doubtless Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published in 1859. It was by a deep-seated instinct that the partisans of conventional Christianity cried out in horror at the notion of the evolution of mankind from lower and ape-like beings. Copernicus had dethroned the earth from being the centre of the material universe ; it seemed as if Darwin had dethroned man from his central position in creation. The waves of resentment spread from circle to circle and went on growing ; and quite lately Europe has learned with some surprise that in some of the Southern States of America popular feeling can prohibit the teaching of the doctrine of development in schools and universities.

It was not, however, the definite views of Darwin in biology which were the most serious enemies of current religious views; but the extension of the doctrine of development into the fields of anthropology, history and psychology. Slowly and irresistibly it made its way. Of course in dealing with man it is necessary to take into account elements which in animal biology are more negligible, personality, will, consciousness; in a word, the element of spirit. But, however fully this necessity be recognized, the mere acceptance of the doctrine of process by law must profoundly modify all our views as to ethics and religion.

The study of the sacred books of Christianity, and of the history of the Christian Society, has been going on for ages. But now there looms in front of these, completely altering their method, the study of man as a religious being, or at all events as a being capable of religion. And man has to be studied, not in a static way, as he may be observed in civilized societies, but in a dynamic way, as he moves on from rude beginnings, gradually becoming modified by the influence of ideas, becoming more complicated and more capable of improvement, developing in intellect, forming societies, acquiring rites and usages.

The search for origins, what may be called the Darwinian tendency, is exposed beyond doubt to great dangers in its earlier stages. For it proceeds from the lower or animal phenomena to the higher, the phenomena of intellect and conscience. At every stage there is a great danger of being content with superficial views, of accepting explanations because they are obvious and easy, rather than because they really grapple with the whole of the problem. In the whole hierarchy of the sciences, from the mathematical to the religious, there is always a temptation to apply in a higher sphere the methods found to be effective in a lower sphere, to accept physical explanations of the phenomena of biology, or to apply biological explanations to the phenomena of consciousness. As we

rise in the scale of the sciences fresh and more complicated explanations have to be sought out. The search into origins tempts us, when we have discovered the original form of a human faculty or need, to suppose that we have explained it, so that nothing more need be said in regard to it; whereas the full problem is to account for the growth of the faculty or need from a humble beginning. In the field of religion, we have to consider, not only the earliest discoverable form of any of its phenomena and developments, but also the fashion of their growth; and in addition their value to individuals and societies. The search for origins must never be wholly separated from the search for values; and the search for values must never be pursued without reference to origins and developments.

There can be no doubt that a hasty or premature introduction of what may roughly be called Darwinian views into the field of religion, and especially of the Christian religion, has naturally and inevitably produced a great crop of scepticism and anti-Christian dogmatism. Prejudice has been raised against the Christian Communion, because it has been found that primitive sacrifices of communion are found among barbarous, even savage, tribes, and it is possible to trace a line of development from the lower to the higher level. Prayers are made by savages to any supernatural beings whom they may acknowledge, and it is therefore regarded by hasty theorizers as a relic of savagery to offer Christian prayer. Even God Himself is in some quarters dethroned because the idea of deity arises originally among peoples who reach it through worship of ancestors or earth-spirits.

At the same time, the appeal to values, though quite legitimate and necessary, must be used with caution and moderation. For it is evident that no religious belief or practice could exist, or at all events maintain itself, if it had not some value. The most superstitious views to be found in the most barbarous of Christian communities

must have some value to that community. They must have some root in human nature, and confer some advantage on those who practise them. If one judges by value, it is necessary to have not a mere observational standard of values, but an ideal one, a standard which recognizes that there is a better and a worse in human nature, and that it is the duty of men to seek the better and avoid the worse.

The estimation of values leads one at once to religious psychology and to experience in religion. It is only in this direction that we can hope to find a solid foundation for religious belief, and a sound way of testing it by fruits.

It is impossible here to discuss, or even to mention, the various philosophic views as to the foundations of religion which have been put forth by thinkers of Modernist tendencies. They may be ranged in two groups. First there is the group of metaphysical theories, usually largely under the influence of Hegel. The Hegelian tendency is especially strong in the writings of the brothers Caird, and in those of T. H. Green, who had a great influence at Oxford in the eighties, and who by force of character quite as much as by his lectures promoted the spread of a kind of idealist philosophy which has been not without influence on the Anglo-Catholics, though he himself was not of that school.

While Green was teaching at Oxford, an influence parallel to his was exercised at Cambridge by F. D. Maurice. He was an obscure writer, more difficult to follow and to understand than even Green. He left no school; and in fact it would have been difficult to extract from his writings any philosophic system. He was very desirous of comprehension, so much so that he often oscillated between different schools, and sometimes seemed to swing back to rigid orthodoxy. But his was a beautiful character; and the evenings when he and Kingsley together received students and talked to them had influence on many young men, including the writer of these pages.

The most notable of Maurice's sayings is that the various sects and schools of Christianity are commonly right in what they assert, and wrong in their denials; a very penetrating and pregnant thesis.

III

An entirely different orientation towards the philosophy of religion has been in the present century produced by the works of the Pragmatists, among whom William James is the most remarkable. His *Varieties of Religious Experience* is a text-book of the psychology of religion which has had a very strong influence. It has been reinforced by Baron von Hügel's great work on the *Mystical Element of Religion* and several other books by Evelyn Underhill, Dean Inge of St. Paul's, and other writers, which have set forth not merely the psychology of conversion and of ordinary Christian experience, but also the more remote and baffling experiences of the great Christian Mystics. These have been for the first time analysed and set in order, not from the devotional but from the psychological point of view.

The most striking feature of the thought of William James, who was very great as a psychologist, was that the active faculties of man are more primary and fundamental than the intellectual powers, that man develops from within, and that his thought is commonly only an intellectual rendering of the results of life, conscious or unconscious. This view of course did not entirely originate with James. He has confessed his indebtedness to a great French thinker, Maine de Biran (1766–1824), who has had a very great effect on the whole course of philosophy in France, and especially on its more recent developments by Boutroux and Bergson. Maine de Biran substituted "Volo ergo sum" for Descartes' "Cogito ergo sum" as the starting-point of philosophy, he maintained that self is fundamentally will. It is since his time that the import-

ance of the subconscious element in man has been fully recognized, and of course that recognition alters the outlook of philosophy; but he remains as one of the greatest figures in modern philosophy. I think, however, that his amendment of Descartes might well be further amended into "Volendo et amando fio", thus substituting the dynamic for the static and introspective point of view.[1]

To me it seems that by this path, better than by any other, we can pass the morass of disbelief, and reach the world of realities, in which God, free-will and immortality are the main features. I do not mean the mere conceptions of those realities, but the realities themselves. This general tendency of thought, which stands in marked contrast to the intellectualism of Hegel, has been called pragmatism or activism, though neither term is quite satisfactory. Pragmatism is defined in the smaller *Oxford Dictionary* as "pedantry, or a matter of fact treatment of things", and when used of a philosophic doctrine, as "doctrine that estimates any assertion solely by its practical bearing upon human interests". The last quoted word is particularly misleading, as it may be taken to mean that we can determine the truth or falsehood of views in philosophy by considering whether it is to our interest, or not to our interest, to accept them. And this absurd misinterpretation has influenced many philosophers, and caused them to regard pragmatism as a mere doctrine of expediency. In some of the writings even of Dean Inge we may find this reading accepted. A similar misrepresentation was current half a century ago as to the meaning of the word utilitarianism, which was regarded not as an attempt at the explanation of human conduct, but as a preaching that only what was obviously useful, and useful in the lowest and most materialist sense of the word, was the proper end of action. The Utilitarianism of Bentham may have lent itself to this misinterpretation;

[1] *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 31.

but some of the Utilitarians had a lofty sense of true values. In the same way Pragmatism primarily merely states a psychological fact, or supposed fact, as to the relations of the active to the intellectual powers of man. And the interpretation of the consequences of that fact may be very various, ranging from an immoral preference for expediency as compared with principle to a new view of the relation of spirit and will to conduct.

If we could use the term Activism rather than Pragmatism to denote this school of thought, we might escape these absurd misunderstandings. But the word Activism is a barbarous compound, and it is not found in the dictionaries.

Perhaps *Spiritual Activism* would be a better phrase. The idea is that in all creation the cause of life and development is an immanent spirit, working from within ; and that in the same way all the manifestations of human life in the individual and society are the result of the activity of human spirit and will, not without the aid of the great Creative Spirit. In the Papal Encyclical activism is condemned under the name *vital immanentism.* Vitalism in biology, activism or pragmatism in philosophy, and immanentism in religion, are all closely related, and indeed are all the acceptance of a point of view. It is a pity that that point of view cannot be spoken of without the introduction of all these *-isms.* All are merely corollaries of the sayings of Jesus, such as " Hear and understand, not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man ". " Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings : these are the things which defile the man." " The good man, out of his good treasury, bringeth forth good things : and the evil man out of his evil treasury bringeth forth evil things." No wonder that the Pharisees, the upholders of institutional religion, were offended at these sayings. They express the essential inwardness of

Jesus, as to which Matthew Arnold and J. R. Seeley have written so admirably.

It is as yet too early to say what will be the effect of the pragmatist turn of thought on the beliefs of the Christian world. It is contrary to the orthodoxy of the Roman Church, which is still based on the intellectual system of Thomas Aquinas. Yet to some sections of that Church it may be very welcome, as transposing the defence of the Roman system from philosophy, in which it is comparatively weak, and in conflict with the spirit of the age, to practical work and the test of fruits, in which it is very strong. I think it possible, and even probable, that before long there may be a movement among the keen thinkers who have a strong affection for the Roman Church—and there are many such in France—to develop a pragmatist philosophy of religious belief which may not only be very effective against Protestant critics, but may even lead to a modified Catholicism. Indeed, much has already been done in this direction, as we shall see in the next chapter, by such writers as Le Roy and Boutroux.

And there is no reason why a parallel line of defence should not be taken by the Anglo-Catholics. That the pragmatist James should have written a penetrating and sympathetic treatise on the religious experience of the Christian mystics of the Middle Ages is a very important and suggestive fact. He opened the door, and it is likely that some of the more philosophic of the Anglo-Catholics will pass in, and find large rooms ready for their occupation.

But of course the Catholic is not the line of thought which attracts me. My sympathies are with the Reformed rather than with the mediæval elements in the Church of England. While an acceptance of Pragmatism makes one feel more kindly and appreciative towards what is called the Catholic tendency in our Church, it does not at all commit one to approval of it. I feel too strongly the wide gap between Christianity and Catholicism to be

able to accept the latter as the equivalent of the former. And I think it possible to develop on pragmatist grounds a defence of the other side of the Modernist position, the side which may be called prophetic as opposed to priestly, the side which prefers spiritual to materialist religion, and regards the increasing reliance upon outward rites and sacraments when compared with the motion of heart and will as in radical contrast with the religion of Jesus. In later chapters I will work on these lines. I cannot hope to express a consensus of Modernist opinion, because at present there is no such consensus; and there cannot be until there is some common groundwork as to the acceptance of which all are agreed. At present Modernists are not an army, but a crowd. My argument, therefore, must be regarded as mine only; no one else is committed to it. At the same time, it is important to note that the extremely able theologians who drew up the Papal Encyclicals, as to which I will presently speak, regard vital immanence as the philosophic basis of what they term the errors of the Modernists. They knew well what they were talking about.

I have recently read many addresses on "religion and life" given by clergymen and dissenting ministers, and have seldom found any the principles of which would be seriously disturbed by the acceptance of pragmatist or activist views as to the nature of perception and the origin of religion. No doubt the speakers in question have all their own views on such subjects. But so far as those views are based on traditional teaching or on *à priori* metaphysical reasoning, I think them unsound, and liable to be swept away by the tide of relativist and scientific thought. They require another and a more secure basis, such as they may find in psychology.

On the other hand, men of science, as was abundantly proved at the Modern Churchmen's Conference at Oxford in 1924, are generally ready to allow that science cannot explain the universe, that their investigations and reason-

ings reach a certain point and then stop, leaving the great and ultimate questions as to personality, providence, the government and the purpose of the world and the like to religion. They do not feel justified as men of science in going on to apply to religious belief the relative principles on which they have worked in biological fields. Between the realm of science and the realm of religion they leave a hiatus, which in my view can only be bridged by the principles of activist philosophy.

CHAPTER IV

MODERNISM IN THE ROMAN CHURCH

IT is difficult to write of Modernism in the Roman Church in a strictly orderly way. One would wish to set forth in the first place the views of the Modernists, and in the second place their condemnation by Rome. But this logical order is not the actual order of events. Modernism existed in France and Italy before it was pounced upon by the Roman Curia in 1906–7. But the ablest expositions of its principles appear in works subsequently published. On the whole it is best, as this is a historic sketch, to follow the order of time, and to relate the condemnation of the movement before we turn to the most notable books in which it is defended.

I

It was in the early years of this century that Modernism in the Roman Church reached its climax. It was said that in Italy and France Modernism had infected not only the priests and the laity but bishops and even Cardinals. Pope Leo XIII himself was suspected of having at least some toleration for it. It was thought that the Roman Curia would find some way of avoiding the direct condemnation of Loisy. The Pope did actually make a concession to historic criticism by appointing a Commission to examine the authenticity of the early books of the Bible. The Archbishop of Albi openly claimed for Catholic

scholars the right of freely pursuing their studies under the auspices of the Church. In England the late Baron Friedrich von Hügel, a man greatly respected by all parties, was in open alliance with Loisy and Tyrrell, and brought their works to the knowledge of many Anglicans.

But Leo XIII died in 1903, and was succeeded by a man of a very different stamp, Pius X, a priest of saintly life, but narrow and bigoted, and quite destitute of intellectual outlook. A reaction began at once. The Biblical Commission, the personnel of which had been changed, reported that the Pentateuch was the immediate work of Moses. The scourge descended upon Loisy and Tyrrell.

The Roman Curia, probably incited by Pope Pius X, put out in 1907 two Encyclical documents, first the decree *Lamentabili*, and secondly the Encyclical *Pascendi*.[1] The decree states that the Holy Father has learned that new and virulent forms of heresy have spread widely in the Church, and infected many. It draws up a list of sixty-five propositions to be utterly repudiated and condemned. It begins with violently condemning Biblical criticism as carried on in the Universities of Germany, England and America, and reserves to the Church all right to interpret Scripture, which is the direct word of God. It asserts that the dogmas of faith are true not merely in a practical or relative but in an absolute sense, that the Christology of Paul, of John, of the Council of Nicæa is that taught by Jesus Himself; that the history of the early Church must be regarded not in an evolutional, but in a dogmatic way.

A few months later was published the Encyclical *Pascendi*, which is a summary, drawn up by authority, of the philosophic and religious views of the Modernists.

The whole of that teaching is arranged into an elaborate system, and held up to execration. It is a very able

[1] Both of these documents will be found, in a French version, in M. Paul Sabatier's *Les Modernistes*, 1909. They are also to be had in English.

document, but drawn up in so rigid a form, that few of the Modernists can find their views satisfactorily reflected in it. They are less logical and less scholastic than the author; mostly they have come to their doctrines by degrees, in the course of thinking and working, and never thoroughly systematized them. The whole Papal scheme is built very much in the air; and contains much which neither English nor French Modernists would accept.

It was disputed at the time at which of the Modernist leaders the Encyclical was mainly aimed. Probably it was primarily directed against Loisy. But in some passages we may find a direct condemnation of the views of Blondel and Laberthonnière; and in others Bergson, or at least his followers in the Roman priesthood, seems to be attacked. Some writers have held that the views of Newman are covertly aimed at. And certainly his teaching of the Development of Christian Doctrine is quite irreconcilable with the Papal views.

The chief writings which have directed the course of Modernism in France and Italy are discussed by Archdeacon Lilley in his excellent work on the subject.[1] In the present book it must suffice to mention three or four of the continental writers who have had the strongest influence in England. We must briefly consider the views of these leaders first as regards Christian history and second as regards dogma.

The most important name in the Modernist view of history is of course that of M. Alfred Loisy, who unites great historic learning and acumen with a beautifully clear style in exposition, and who has had the courage, very remarkable in a Roman priest, to stand by his views against all attack, and to suffer excommunication rather than retract them. But although this courage proves his honesty, it cannot exempt him from criticism.

It is a truth familiar to all who engage in philosophic or religious controversy, that an extreme view, logically

[1] *Modernism, a Record and a Review*, by A. L. Lilley, 1908.

carried out, appeals to many readers much more forcibly than views less rigid, which make more account of fact. M. Loisy's views are decidedly extreme. He supposed himself to have discovered a way of reconciling intellectual faithfulness to the principles of historic and critical science with dutiful submission to the authority of the Roman Church in all matters of faith and morals. His mode of reconcilement consisted in pushing to a length to which it has never before been pushed the distinction between what is matter of history, to be decided on principles of historic investigation, and what is matter of dogma, to be regulated by that Church, which he regarded as the visible representative of Christ. The reconcilement between *la science* and *la foi* was to be produced by so rigidly defining the field of each, and by erecting such mighty barriers between them, that collision became impossible.

How this scheme works may be shown by a few examples. None is more striking or more illustrative of the paradox of Loisy's position than his attitude in regard to the Lord's Supper. First, the critical half of him points out with admirable clearness and perfect frankness the historic difficulties which surround the ordinary view, that it was established as a sacrament by the Founder of Christianity just before His departure. He dwells on the fact that St. Paul is our most complete authority for the events of the Last Supper, and that he interprets these events in the light of his doctrine of the cross and the atonement. Paul, he says, influenced the Second Gospel and through it the first. M. Loisy thinks that the original narrative must have run to this effect, "And while they were eating, taking bread, he blessed it, and brake, giving it them and saying: 'This is my body'. And, taking the cup, he gave thanks and gave it them, and they all drank. And he said to them, 'In truth I tell you that I shall no more drink the fruit of the vine, until the day when I shall drink it new in the Kingdom of God'". Thus,

according to M. Loisy, it appears that the historic Jesus did not institute the supper at all. Yet, at all events in his Roman days, he accepted the rite as the kernel or the crown of the whole of Christianity.

Another very characteristic view of Loisy relates to the passages where Jesus speaks of the Second Advent—as indeed he does in the passage already cited—as close at hand. He accepts them as historical, and frankly allows that in this matter Jesus was under a delusion. In fact his distinction between history and faith allows Loisy to treat the former with most complete freedom. He set out to refute the "Protestant" scepticism of Harnack, but his historic scepticism went beyond that of the German professor.

In the preface to *Autour d'un petit livre* Loisy thus sums up his procedure: "He had used," he said, "the Gospels as historic documents, according to the evidence presented by the various elements of which they were composed; he did not touch the dogma of Biblical inspiration, nor the authority which belongs to the Church in the dogmatic interpretation of Scripture. He tried to limn the historic portrait of the Saviour; he formulated no definition as to the transcendant relation of Christ to God. He analysed the teaching of Jesus in regard to the Kingdom of Heaven and its near approach; he did not thence draw any conclusion in regard to the theological question of the human knowledge of Christ. He attributed to St. Paul the theoretic conception of the Atonement; he avoided denying that Jesus was the Saviour of men . . ." and so forth. Loisy could surely scarcely expect the Roman Church to tolerate so radical a view.

The other side of Loisy's creed, that which has to do with doctrine, or dogma as he calls it, is much less clear-cut, and more difficult to set forth briefly. Yet this is the side which has had far more influence on his many friends and admirers in England and France. His historical speculations are, after all, from the religious point

of view mainly negative and destructive. This kind of work has been done to greater effect and with more success by some of the great German theologians, not only Dr. Harnack, whom he has singled out as an antagonist, but others too numerous to mention. If in some points Loisy has improved upon their views, in others he is inferior to them. But his views of doctrine are evolutional and really constructive; and his wonderful style has, like that of Renan, added greatly to their influence. In France style goes a very long way.

In the most important of his works, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, Loisy sets forth with great lucidity the two views, that the basis of doctrine is the Christian experience, and that its expression must vary from age to age with the intellectual surroundings. "In dogma, the historian sees the interpretation of religious facts, acquired by a laborious effort of theological thought. If dogmas be divine in origin and substance, they are human in structure and composition." So low does Loisy rate the merely intellectual side of dogma, that he is quite ready to hold that contradictory statements of doctrine may both be sides of the truth. "There is but one eternal God, and Jesus is God: there is the dogma of theology. Human salvation is altogether in the hands of God, and man is free to save himself or not: that is the dogma of grace. The Church has authority over men, and the Christian is only responsible to God: that is the dogma of the Church. Abstract logic would demand the suppression in each case of one of these strange pairs of statements. But attentive observation shows that one could not do so without compromising the living balance of religion."

One has heard much of this sort of teaching in England of late years; indeed it strongly reminds one of F. D. Maurice; but the style of Maurice is so obscure that it is always difficult to determine his exact meaning.

Of course Loisy was not content to leave these contradictions face to face, as did the authors of the so-called

Athanasian Creed. His line of reconcilement is that the substance of dogma must be accepted on the authority of the Church; but that the expression of dogma by the Church from time to time is dominated not only by the traditional forms of Greek philosophy, but also by a sense of the immediate needs of the Christian community. He also maintained that in our day the Church is bound to seek for fresh formulæ. "The mere knowledge of the history of dogma raises no fresh difficulty in the intelligence of the believer; it only shows him how the ancient difficulties were met. But at present the whole aspect of knowledge is changed by the acceptance of a new and very different conception of the world and the universe, so that one can without exaggeration say that the Christian, possessing the traditional dogma, stands, in relation to the contemporary world, in the same situation as the apostles when they imported the (Jewish) idea of the Messiah into the Græco-Roman world."

I need not go on to speak of Loisy's views as to the Church and the sacraments. They are really not only Roman but Ultramontane. It was very well for him to find a way of reconciling relative and absolute, history and dogma. But the difficulty was that that way had to be commended not to the reason of thinkers, but to the consent of the Roman Church, which he regarded as the only body of Christ. And when that Church not only would not listen to him, but excommunicated him, his bolt was shot. In recent years, as a professor in the Sorbonne, Loisy has carried further his historic views, has indeed developed them with a certain recklessness. He has found adherents in some countries, but few in England, where the more sober methods of writers like Harnack and Jülicher have been more attractive. Like Renan, he has drifted away from Christianity. He had appealed to Cæsar, and from the verdict of Cæsar there was no further appeal.

The interesting and pathetic history of George Tyrrell

has been closely followed in England by many who have been attracted by his books, *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* and the rest. In type he offers a sharp contrast to Loisy. Loisy as a Frenchman is nothing if not logical; Tyrrell's notion of logic is Irish like himself. His works are full of the very spirit of religion combined with an earnest search for truth. But they are in no degree systematic. It would be impossible to compile out of them a consistent scheme of belief. In his *Through Scylla and Charybdis* he writes: "The process through which I have reached my present position will appear as a wavering, rather than as a straight line, a result that should greatly facilitate the critic's task". If he means that it would be easy for a critic to convict him of inconsistencies, he is right. But to a critic who really wishes to do him justice this "wavering line" is a most baffling thing. Ruskin himself is scarcely more difficult to reduce to formulæ. One realizes that in quoting his views one is very likely to emphasize what he regarded as unimportant, and was quite ready to give up. Nevertheless, I will repeat a few impressions in regard to him written when I had recently read his works.[1]

In many ways Tyrrell belongs to a very advanced school of religious liberalism. He is in a measure a pragmatist; he places the divine will at the root of history; he draws a broad line of distinction between religion and theology; he insists strongly on the doctrine of divine immanence; he speaks boldly as to the evils of priestcraft; he is set against Papal infallibility. Yet he clings, as is perhaps natural to one trained in the Jesuit School, to much with which other liberals would readily dispense. He sometimes puts the new wine into very old bottles.

In fact it would be possible to extract from the works of Tyrrell both a vigorous assertion and a complete rejection of the Modernist position. The point to which he continually reverts is that Christianity is an inspiration, not a system, that it appeals to the heart, not to the head;

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, vi, p. 924.

but that the Church has made it into an institution, and crystallized the earliest teaching into an intellectual system, which he cannot too strongly reprobate. But he does not consider the question whether, living in the world, and having to make good against the secular power, the Church could have taken any other course. And he mixes in hopeless confusion the primitive Church, the mediæval Church, and the ideal Church, just as do our own Anglo-Catholics.

Many of Tyrrell's sayings remind one strongly of Matthew Arnold, whether the influence was direct or not. Over and over again he insists on the distinction between revelation, or prophetic truth, and theology, or, as he sometimes calls it, theologism. Revelation, he holds, comes first as an impulse to activity, and later is crystallized in thought ; but thought at best can only give an imperfect rendering of inspiration. But theology, which tries to enclose the reality in a system, is in Tyrrell's view everything that is bad. It is a pseudo-science. It is the foe, the bitter and persecuting foe, of all scientific knowledge of the world.

But when he has to treat of the Bible as inspired literature, he speaks in quite another key. Sometimes he says that though revelation did not cease with the Apostles, yet its great and classical period then comes to an end.[1] But often he writes as if he thought the Christian inspiration limited to Apostolic times. Speaking of his latest position, he writes : " It is a return to the earlier and stricter view as to the unchanging, unprogressive character of the Apostolic revelation. It is a repudiation of all attempts to mitigate the supposed difficulties of this severer view by theories of development, dialectical or otherwise. It insists rigorously on the theological contention that the dogmatic decisions of the Universal Church do not in any way add to or amplify the revelation which it is their purpose but to safeguard and reassert.

[1] *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 324.

Understanding by 'dogma' a religious truth imposed authoritatively as the word of God, not as a conclusion of theological reflection, it rejects the very notion of the development, and still more the multiplication, of dogmas, and acquiesces cordially in the patristic identification of novelty and heresy". Here we have something like a denial of the whole Modernist position. From another page [1] we learn that the dogma of the Trinity, "One God with three Divine Persons", is not a theological development, but a prophetic utterance of the Apostolic revelation. But surely, whatever the Apostles taught, it was not the doctrine of the Trinity thus formulated. It passes one's wits to discern how theology can be condemned and dogma of this sort saved.

I need not go on to Tyrrell's doctrine of the Church and the Pope. It is evident that we cannot expect to find in his works any logical or consistent scheme of belief. In fact what attracted his many friends and admirers was not his system of theology, but his many remarkable utterances, his character, and his hard fate in being expelled from the Church which he so greatly loved. In his later life he made some approach to the Anglican position; but the transition from Romanism to Anglicanism seems to be one which few find it possible to make. Indeed, it would be in some ways more correct to speak of Tyrrell in the next chapter, dealing with Anglican Modernism, than in the present place, since he never really absorbed the Roman position.

II

There are many other writers on Modernism on whom anyone who attempted to give a history of the movement would have to dwell, Desjardins, Boutroux and Le Roy, the Abbé Laberthonnière and the novelist Fogazzaro, and others. As regards them I can only refer the reader to

[1] *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 343

Mr. Lilley's book on Modernism. My own knowledge of these writers is limited; and if I had full knowledge, it would be quite impossible in a few pages to draw up any intelligible sketch of their often very complicated and subtle schemes. They attempt in various ways to reconcile history with faith, to reach forward from the subjective to the objective, to find links between the historic Jesus and the Eternal Christ, to explain the meaning and value of dogma.

In regard to Laberthonnière, I must content myself with quoting a paragraph from Mr. Lilley. He writes (p. 96): "The new Apologetic, as it has been called, is, like many things which are hailed as new by injudicious friends or contemptuously labelled new by interested enemies, not new at all, but exactly as old as human faith. That is its own first claim. It is merely the conscious analysis of the process by which the religious life has always attained, and must always attain, to the certainty of vital truth—a process which we may call unconscious, in so far as it has not adequately realized itself in terms of thought. It is only the experience of the mystics and of all great religious souls caught in the living act, and made intelligible. Its value as apologetic lies in the fact that it finds in life itself, in the totality of living wills, the only trustworthy means of affirming reality. The traditional apologetic has failed because it is lifeless, because it has attempted to substitute an abstraction of thought for a living belief. It has thought to present the eternal mysteries of God, of the universe, of the soul, as rigidly ascertained facts of completed knowledge, not as the increasingly ascertainable certainties of a knowledge which grows in exact proportion as life grows".

Laberthonnière is an adherent of the immanentism at which the Papal Encyclical shoots its arrows. He also maintains a form of activism; and this indeed may be said of the philosophy of Le Roy, who maintains that theology grows out of religion, not religion out of theology;

that statements of dogma are secondary, and the religious feelings out of which they grow primary.

M. Le Roy is a brilliant member of the School of Bergson and Boutroux. His work *Dogme et Critique* is a landmark in the history of Modernism. It excited unending controversy in France, and is a good starting-point for the development of views on the philosophy of dogma. Not that his views are strikingly new. In some form they have been held by many doctors of the Church, especially the Mystics, who were influenced by the writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite.

The critical part of his work consists in showing the unsatisfactory character of doctrine regarded as a purely intellectual system, and enclosed in a series of propositions. He lays bare the unsuitability of such doctrine to the modern mind, which finds that it will not fit into the frame of scientific knowledge. He illustrates the difficulty of getting out of the mere phrases of a creed any intelligible meaning. He shows their dependence upon obsolete ways of thinking. In this part of his work, M. Le Roy reminds us of Mansel, whose brilliant *Bampton Lectures* have exercised a clarifying influence on philosophic religious writers of all English schools, whether in the way of attraction or repulsion.

But Le Roy is not content with mere negation. He does not merely prove the intellectual weakness and barrenness of verbal dogma, and leave it at that. As a Christian and a Churchman he realizes the importance of doctrine in the history of the Church, and wants to find for it a more satisfactory basis. He transfers the burden from the intellectual to the practical ground. It is the moral and volitional values of doctrines, their relation to the Christian life, rather than their speculative validity, which gives them their sanction. They are primarily rules for conduct. Instead of trying to prove the divine personality, act as if God were personal. Instead of worrying over the dogma of the resurrection of Christ,

try to be in relations with the ever-living Christ in Heaven. This is far more nearly in the line of Maurice than of Mansel. It is indeed one of the latest shoots of the tree which came from the seed " If any man willeth to do the will of God, he shall know the doctrine whether it is of God ".

The transfer of doctrine to the practical life, the valuation of it rather by practical fruit than by theoretical consistency, is not an easy process. It runs the greatest danger of leading men into obscurantism, into contempt for right thinking, into unbridled enthusiasm. Of course Le Roy tries to meet this difficulty ; and it must be allowed that it is in this matter of some advantage to him to belong to the Roman Church. For to a Roman Catholic there is not the same deep fissure between the primitive Church and that of our own time which exists for Protestants. He will maintain that at all times, alike in the primitive preaching of the faith, in the great Councils of the Church, and in the Roman organization of our own days, this stress upon practice and conduct has been the rule. The Church, Le Roy holds, has no right to impose formulæ which are unintelligible, but it has a right to regulate conduct, and in doing so it may find the need of demanding acceptance of such doctrines as represent the general religious experience. Thus the tendency to individual aberration is countered by the existence of an organization which thinks for all, and overpowers the private tendencies of members.

Pope Pius X was not contented with condemning the teaching of the Modernists. He was determined practically to stamp it out. He ordained that the scholastic philosophy of Thomas Aquinas should be the basis of the training in the Catholic Colleges, that children from their earliest years should be trained in the only right way. Seminarists were not only to avoid the universities, but not to read newspapers and periodicals except a very few selected by the bishops. Finally, he set up in every diocese a council

of watchers or *vigilantes* who were to hunt out heresy and take measures for its suppression. All the clergy were required to take an oath, asserting that they accepted as unerring all the doctrine set forth by authority, and rejected all teaching opposed to it. Thus we find set up in our own day an echo of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages. But of course now the penalties can only be religious; the secular arm is not at the service of the Church as it used to be, to torture and burn recusants.

Thus the dreams of the French and Italian Modernists, and of their sympathizers in England, that it is even now possible to combine adherence to the Church of Rome with intellectual enlightenment and social progress, came for the present to an end. Rome has nailed her colours to the mast, and is determined that she will either conquer modern civilization or else go down with faith unchanged. How far the progressive Roman Catholics have really submitted, and how far they have merely professed obedience and kept in silence to their old opinions, can only be judged by those who have an intimate knowledge of the Roman Church from within.

The history of Modernism in the Roman Church is less closely connected with our subject than its history in our own country. Indeed, some English Modernists, notably Dean Inge, would deny any close relation between the two, and would speak harshly in regard to the Roman movement. Even the fact that it has been violently suppressed by the Roman Curia would seem to tell against it; if truth, as we in England generally think, cannot be suppressed.

Nevertheless, the Roman and the English movement are closely akin. They arise out of the same tendency of thought, and have the same object. Both are developments of evolutional as opposed to absolute religion. Yet the differences between them are striking enough. The French have been the leaders in Continental Modernism. And in two respects the French mind differs notably from

the English. When a Frenchman speaks of Christianity, he is usually thinking of the Roman Church, which is far more conspicuous in France than in England. The Protestants in France are comparatively a small body; and though they are in many cases men of great ability, and though they have influence out of proportion to their numbers, they are not the directors of thought. And secondly, the French mind is far more logical than the English, and argues in a more rigid way. In England, in every school of religion, compromise is prevalent, as it is in politics. The English thinker is given to halting when he reaches results which seem to him absurd, and patching up some mediating scheme: the French thinker goes on to the end, and if the end seems to him absurd, he returns to his premisses and searches in them for the original fault. The natural result of this logical bias is that in France *dogma* occupies a far more prominent place than it does in England. It is observable that the French speak of *le dogme* where the English, even Newman, speak of *doctrine*. And the difference runs deep. Dogma is more systematized than doctrine, and is closely connected with the idea of authority; doctrine is more plastic and changeable.

The history of French Modernism may make clear to us two points. The first is that the great difficulty of our time in the Christian world is in reconciling history and doctrine. The attempt of Loisy in this matter failed; but it is not easy to understand how anyone could have expected that he could turn the minds of the Roman authorities in a new direction, and reconcile them to relative views in religion. The problem remains. The second point is that in order to defend the doctrines of the Church it is necessary to remove them to a fresh ground, from the speculative to the practical world, from thought to conduct. These two points are equally clear in the history of Modernism in the English Church.

CHAPTER V

MODERNISM IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH

THERE is, however, another matter of which I must briefly treat, before going on to my main thesis. I have to speak not of Modernism in general, but rather of Modernism in the English Church. Modernism is essentially a church movement.

I

It is obviously impossible that English churchmen should think of their church as a Romanist thinks of his. In Roman countries the church is a huge reality, the end of every religious vista. In such countries the church is so far identified with Christianity that scarcely anyone would leave the church who did not also leave the Christian faith. So every feeling of love and reverence for the Bible, the Saviour, the Saints passes on into love and reverence for the Church. It is regarded as the one way of salvation, the Ark of God in which alone one can be secure amid the troubles of time. Multitudes, even in our secularist days, would give their lives for it.

Many of the English clergy feel, or try to feel, thus in regard to what they call the Catholic Church. But there is a great difference between the passion for a church of great outward splendour, and rigidly maintained discipline, and veneration for an ideal society, the limits of which are hard to determine, and which one has to construct for oneself out of the data of history and belief. Anglo-

Catholics speak much of this ideal church, and doubtless are strongly attached to it. But, after all, what is it? Is it the church of the apostolic age, or the church before the division of East and West, or the church which bears certain marks of authenticity in doctrine and practice? If it be the church of apostolic succession, such succession can only be proved by a very free manipulation of history. Love is attracted not by the vague and distant, but by the concrete and present. It is all very well to make an ideal mistress, and to adorn her with all charms and all virtues, but one would not fall in love with her in the same way in which one might fall in love with a neighbour's daughter.

But though love for the English Church cannot be so strong and fervid as love for the Roman Church, it may be, and indeed is, in many Anglicans, a strong feeling. It is, like family feeling and patriotism, capable of arousing enthusiasm and guiding action.

The more [1] we consider the position of other branches of the Church of Christ, the more we shall realize the inestimable advantages of our own. On one side we see the Roman Church, with its newly revived inquisition and its avowed determination to put an end to all liberty of thought. On the other side we see the smaller Protestant bodies drifting hither and thither, and sometimes welcoming the wildest aberrations in thought and practice. We cling the more closely to our Church, and feel the enormous advantages it can claim. In the first place, it is free and comprehensive, allowing wide latitude of views even to the clergy, so that a pastor who is really useful and devoted will seldom be called in question for any breadth of opinion, or for any views as to ritual, unless he is intolerant of the differing views of others. In the second place, it is national, representing the English race on its most characteristic side—a slow-minded race, with a strong belief in

[1] I reproduce here a paragraph from a paper published in 1908 in the volume of essays called *Anglican Liberalism*.

truth and righteousness, not given to the pursuit of distant ideals, but eager to do what is right in the present circumstances; a race accessible to literature and poetry, but without much feeling for art; a tolerant, quiet and manly people, with a faculty for command. In the third place, it lies close to the facts of personal religion, interposing no sacerdotal class between the souls of men and God, but trying to bring the worshipper and the Worshipped into close relations. In all its services such great spiritual realities as sin and pardon, atonement and holiness, the desire of a better life and cravings for divine aid, are made the main theme. It fully realizes that the Church can only provide the opportunity; the real work of salvation lies between the soul and its Maker. And in the fourth place, it has historic justification; it is a great stem of the Christian tree, drawing sap from the roots, connected by a never-broken tradition with the early history of Christianity, a reservoir to contain all that the merits of saints and heroes in the past have contributed to the richness of spiritual life in our later days.

This may seem but a cool encomium on the English Church. But that Church is essentially moderate and mediating. In the Articles we read: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite for the same". By this definition the English Church renounces all claim to special privilege, all exclusive right to stand between the English people and God. But to Modernists it offers great advantages over other bodies. Its organization is not purely democratic. In little republics such as are, at least in theory, the Congregational Churches, ordered on democratic—or indeed often plutocratic—lines, a pastor who is guilty or suspected of unorthodoxy is liable to persecution or ejection. Even among the Presbyterians, as we see from many examples in Scotland and America

he may be harshly judged by his colleagues. But in the English Church, the formulæ are simple, if somewhat out of date; and a clergyman has only to express a general assent to them. The Church forms a protecting envelope, within which he may quietly ponder the documents and facts of Christianity. As at present Modernism has not gone far in the task of reconstruction, he will not be tempted to try to force his views on the reluctant; he may try to work his way to better and higher views of Christianity, in the meantime being careful not to give offence to his people by openly attacking their more conservative views.

Especially the recent organization of the Church, in parish councils and Church Assembly, may, unless power falls into the hands of bigots, provide a satisfactory means for the gradual modification of the beliefs of clergy and laity. Only now have the rights of the laity been more fully recognized and reasonable schemes for the revision of the Prayer Book promulgated. Of course in all liberty there is danger. It is possible that the Anglo-Catholic party, being much better organized than other parties, may obtain an undue share of influence in the Assembly. But unless the Church, and indeed the English people, is prepared to sacrifice the national character, and to turn its back on all the fruits of our thought and character during the last four centuries; unless it is prepared once more to bow its neck to the Roman yoke, we may hope that good will prevail over evil in the working of the new representative system.

It was perfectly natural that to French and Italian Modernists the alternative would be between the Roman Church and none at all. Believing strongly in that Church with her priesthood, her dogmas and her sacraments, and feeling on the other hand the impossibility of resisting the progress of historic criticism, they could only hope for a reformed Catholicism; they even talked of the possibility of a reforming Pope. These hopes were

doomed to disappointment. The rigid scheme of Rome could not be modified or changed into progressive Christianity.

But yet these Modernists were right in thinking that for the saving of Christianity amid the storm belief in a Church was necessary. This is exactly where they differed from liberal Protestants. To the latter religion is apt to seem a personal thing, a way for saving individual souls. But it is also a social thing. The community has a right and a duty to supplement and even to over-ride the convictions of individuals by the necessities of the common life of Christians. It is the spirit of Christ in the community which carries on the life of Christ on earth. If that life were confined to the Church of Rome, it would have infinite claims to our acceptance. But the course of events in the last three centuries has not confirmed such a view. The great reforming movement of the sixteenth century has produced in northern Europe moral and spiritual growths which are in some respects greatly superior to the fruits of Rome, though there have been noble developments on both sides. If Rome has excelled in some virtues, in others the Nordic peoples have far excelled her. Of course one cannot judge from mere material prosperity, but must regard the real *morale* of the peoples. If Rome has produced characters of fine saintliness, men and women filled with the passion for the highest life, if she has in whole classes of people discouraged vice and encouraged the virtues most necessary to society, yet the northern countries can produce other excellences which are not natural to Rome, love of civic liberty, an active principle of philanthropy, intense devotion to truth. Of course one cannot weigh virtues in the scales. But as greatness and goodness in England have been for four centuries closely related to Reformed Christianity, it is impossible that our people should ever again submit to the Roman yoke. The excellent clergy who are striving in the Romeward direction are flying in the face of history ;

and their motive is probably less an idealism than despair in the face of the evils of Society.

For English Modernists there can be no infallible Church; but the spirit of Christ is working in various religious bodies. The English Church combines in a great measure the advantages of the Roman and the Reformed tendencies, the historic and the individual elements. And now, when after ages of inaction our Church has gained a constitution and a possibility of progress, we may go on with confidence that she will solve the difficulties which are, from the Roman point of view, insuperable. Moderation, kindly feeling, love of truth, are on our side.

The problem of Modernism is, how to retain the values of religion, true doctrine, noble principles of action, a Church embodying the spirit of Christ, in spite of the great change in the intellectual atmosphere which modern discovery has brought about.

Thus the three main ideas of the Roman Catholic Modernists have to be accepted, perhaps in a modified form, in any effective modern presentation of Christianity.

In the first place, the claims of scientific history have to be allowed in the historic field, just as the claims of physical and biologic science have to be allowed in their respective fields. But in history the influence of personality, and the divine influence which acts through personality, have also to be allowed.

In the second place, doctrine or dogma is to be regarded, not as a system of intellectual or scientific propositions, but as attempts to set forth in language the experience of the Church. Such setting forth must needs have temporary elements and be liable to supersession or transformation with time.

In the third place, the greatest reverence is due to the continuity of spiritual life and inspiration in the Church. But we cannot accept the Church, still less any one branch of it, as an imperious mistress to dictate belief. Rather it must be considered as the reservoir into which all the

streams of inspiration flow, and whence the waters again flow out to fertilize individual lives, or the churches of various peoples. The outward organization of the Church, however necessary in order to curb the waywardness of individuals, is not the most important feature of it, but the common life of the members, which should be a continuation on earth of the life of the Founder.

II

There is little organization among Modernist Churchmen. It is always easier to organize conservatives than liberals, unless the latter have a very definite programme, and are pursuing some object which appeals strongly to the imagination. But there are, no doubt, in many parts of England, small societies of friends who meet for discussion or to encourage one another, and who are fully impressed with the need of modernizing Christianity. There was a society called the Liberal Catholic Union, recruiting its members from the High Church party; but I understand that it is dissolved. The only society of Modernists which has come out into full light, and published literature, is the society called *The Churchmen's Union.*

At the end of the last century, as there had been reported some instances of the persecution of clergymen of liberal views, it was decided to form a society for their protection, and for the propagation of their beliefs. Thus came into being the Churchmen's Union for the Advancement of Liberal Religious Thought.[1] The Society has in recent years greatly grown in numbers, though it does not include a tithe of those who sympathize with its views. It has a monthly journal, the *Modern Churchman,* ably edited by Dr. Major, the Principal of Ripon Hall at Oxford, and in

[1] The particulars which follow are mostly taken from a pamphlet by Mr. P. H. Bagenal, published by the Churchmen's Union, and to be had at their office in the Church House, Westminster, price fourpence.

every year since 1914 it has held a conference for the discussion of some important questions in religion and theology, such matters as the training of the clergy, the functions of the Church, Christian ethics, or the psychology of religious experience. Full reports of these Conferences have been published in special numbers of the *Modern Churchman*, which have sold, in some cases, to the number of 6,000. One of the Conferences, that of 1921, held at Girton, had as its subject *Christ and the Creeds*, and the papers read were violently attacked by some religious newspapers, though when they appeared, printed at length in the report, the violence died down, until the matter was taken up by the English Church Union. I must give a brief account of the controversy which then arose.

The main activity of the Society has been exercised by the Council, who hold meetings at least once in three months, who keep a hand upon the pulse of the Church, and who have on several occasions made representations to Convocation in the liberal interest, representations which have always been received with courtesy and sympathy, and have sometimes modified legislation. In February 1922 the English Church Union presented to the Convocations of Canterbury and York a petition that those bodies would declare contrary to the teaching of the Bible and the Church some of the papers contained in the volume reporting the Churchmen's Union Conference at Girton.

The Council of the Churchmen's Union naturally presented a counter petition, which was signed not only by themselves, but also by many distinguished theologians outside the Society. The matter was gravely and fully discussed by both Convocations, and both decided in favour of the Churchmen's Union. The report of the Upper House of the Canterbury Convocation ran as follows: "This House recognizes the gain which arises from inquiry, at once fearless and reverent, into the meaning and expression of the faith, and welcomes every aid which the thoughtful student finds in the results of sound historical

and literary criticism, and of modern scientific investigation of the problems of human psychology; and it deprecates the mere blunt denunciation of contributions made by earnest men in their endeavour to bring new light to bear upon these difficult and anxious problems. At the same time it sees a grave and obvious danger in the publication of debatable suggestions as if they were ascertained truths, and emphasizes the need of caution in the whole matter, especially on the part of responsible teachers in the Church". To this report the pamphlet of Mr. Bagenal appends a note not destitute of humour: "It should be added that no one could more heartily approve the last paragraph of this report than the Modernists themselves. The publication of debatable suggestions as if they were ascertained truths is one of the greatest foes with which they have to contend. If sometimes they are led away to follow a bad example it is much to be regretted".

The Upper House of the Convocation of York passed a resolution still more favourable to the cause of the Churchmen's Union. Clearly we have here a charter for liberty of study and publication of the results of study, which will be a valuable possession of the English Church. For the present, at all events, there need be little fear of the official persecution of Modernists for opinions which they may feel compelled to set forth. But there is, no doubt, a party among the Anglo-Catholics which would, if it could, expel them bodily.

In 1907, in view of the approaching revision of the constitution and documents of the English Church, the Council of the Society submitted to the Houses of Convocation their views on the subject of reform. They urged that regard should be had to the need of elasticity in the ordinances of the Church, in order that its comprehensiveness should be preserved. They desired a full and frank recognition of the established results of modern learning as regards the Bible and Church history; and urged the

need of free and independent study among the clergy. They advocated the right of the laity to a voice in the Councils of the Church. In another document they detailed the alterations in the Prayer Book which they considered desirable, with a view to making it better suited to the intellectual and social conditions of the time.

The aims of the Society, as authoritatively put forth, are eight in number :—

1. To affirm the continuous and progressive character of the revelation given by the Holy Spirit in the spheres of knowledge and of conduct.
2. To maintain the right and duty of the Church of England to restate her doctrines from time to time in accordance with this revelation.
3. To uphold the historic comprehensiveness of the Church of England.
4. To defend the freedom of responsible students, clerical as well as lay, in their work of criticism and research.
5. To promote the adaptation of the Church Services to the needs and knowledge of the time.
6. To assert the claim of the laity to a larger share in the government and responsible work of the Church.
7. To foster co-operation and fellowship between the Church of England and other Christian Churches.
8. To study the application of Christian principles and ideals to the whole of our social life.

There is evidently nothing final in this programme ; it may be modified from time to time ; and its omissions are noteworthy. The eighth principle has been added more recently. No doubt many members would like to make it prominent, but the Council has always kept it somewhat in the background, not because it is unimportant, but because it is taken up by other bodies, such as Copec. If it were made prominent in the Conferences of the Society, it would be likely to obscure all the other principles. Fundamental as it is, it is not the object for which primarily

the Society was founded. That object was rather to remove intellectual difficulties than practical stumbling-blocks. And surely no one can deny that the pursuit of that object is a great and sufficient task for the Society.

By far the most important of the functions of the Churchmen's Union, a function which is exerted conspicuously in the annual conferences, is the restatement of Christian doctrine in terms not out of harmony with the modern intellectual atmosphere. And as this function is the most important, so it is by far the most difficult. It leads over ground full of pitfalls, and in fact must rather be the task of working societies of Christians than of individual writers. If, as is maintained in this book, doctrine results, not so much from intellectual investigation as from the working of the Christian spirit in the Church, we are bound to be sceptical as to the permanent validity of any consistent and formulated scheme of doctrine. And, on the other hand, we shall not be surprised if there be found in the creed of any branch of the Church some logical inconsistencies.

I must add a few words as to the Modernist movement in the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. That there is such a movement may probably be news to most of my readers. But it was sure to come, the conditions in America being not unlike those in England. As Coleridge and Carlyle were the forerunners of Modernism in England, so were Emerson and others in America. Notable among the clergy whom we may call Modernist were Bishop Phillips Brooks and Dr. Rainsford. Quite lately the movement has taken more definite and organized form. So far as I am able to judge, the spirit of the movement in the two countries is the same. But when we consider the extraordinary energy and vigour of the American people, we may be sure that Modernists in the United States and Canada will in some respects deviate from those of England, and they are likely to go far. At present it would be premature to attempt to give par-

ticulars of their actions. The very interesting work of Dr. Sterrett on American Modernism shows that Churchmen in America work on very clear and practical lines. Before long there is sure to be an alliance between Modernists in America and those in England. But we must have patience until it takes definite form.

CHAPTER VI

SPIRIT IN RELIGIOUS HISTORY

I

WHEN, at the beginning of this century, M. Auguste Sabatier, the *doyen* of the French Protestants, published his *Les religions d'autorité et la religion de l'Esprit*, he was able to set side by side, as existing in the Christian Church of the West, three kinds of religion : there was the faith of the Roman Church, august and venerable, claiming to hold the doctrine originally delivered to the Church, unchanged and unchangeable for all time, with its creeds, its sacraments, and its apostolic succession. There was the Protestant faith, also authoritative and absolute, based upon Scripture, the beliefs of the early Church, and the doctrines of the great Reformers. And there was the religion of the Spirit, which trusted to the inspiration of the Church as coming from its invisible head, which claimed no infallibility, but maintained the inspirational and progressive character of religious truth, and worked for the present and the future.

But since Sabatier wrote the religious aspect has been rapidly changing. The notion of an infallible Bible has almost died out in the highways of thought, and finds a refuge among extreme conservatives, such as the Fundamentalists of America, and the extreme Low Church in England. We may fairly say that there now stand face to face two great rivals, on one side the great Roman

Church with a strong band of imitators in the Church of England, on the other side in many varieties the religious bodies who reject infallibility, and find truth in all religious organizations and thought which conform to the spirit of Christ and carry on in the world the work which He began. The great majority of English Christians, so far as they consider these matters at all, hold views intermediate between the two extremes.

Mere relativity in religion does not satisfy. It is not enough to recognize the value of various forms of Christian belief. The spirit craves in religion something more than the relative and phenomenal. It will not be satisfied without an assurance that personality, conduct, God, are above and beyond the mere world of phenomena, and beyond the mere feelings and aspirations of the individual. They must be real with the intensest reality and in the fullest sense objective. Any religious teaching which is defective on this point will be without practical validity, will never be able to sustain the spirit amid the sorrows and disappointments of life, or stir it up to an eager performance of duty. Still less will it enable a man to impart hope and energy to others, or to form schemes for the help and saving of men. It cannot be at the root of a missionary religion. And a religion, or at all events a form of Christianity, which is devoid of the missionary spirit is without the Christian inspiration.

We are bound therefore seriously to consider how relative religion may be combined with, and reconciled to, some form of absolute religion. However unsatisfactory may be the forms hitherto and at present taken by absolute Christianity, they must needs still attract, and still meet, the needs and cravings of men, in spite of all intellectual difficulties, unless some way may be found for transferring to some form of relative religion the feelings of love and devotion to God and man which absolute Christianity is able to satisfy.

Without wishing to condemn the various ways of

reconcilement which have been put forth by English philosophers, I venture to think that a really satisfactory way of reconciliation of the relative and the absolute can best be found by accepting the activist principle in philosophy and religion. In this view the origin of religion is to be found in the human will and its inspiration by God. Will is prior to thought and gives rise to thought, as well as to rite and organization. Will is the only source of power known to us. We recognize its working in ourselves and others, and we cannot think of the divine inspiration of conduct except as coming from will.

It is very suggestive to note that it is in the direction of an activist or pragmatist philosophy that the Modernists of France have moved. The great names, Boutroux, Laberthonnière, Le Roy and the rest all show this movement. In my opinion it is the natural and almost inevitable result of an acceptance of Modernist principles.

It is on these lines that I proceed. I should not have the audacity to say that no other way of approaching the matter is possible or legitimate. My friend Dean Rashdall was satisfied that his particular type of philosophy was quite equal to the situation, and he was disposed to consider me a heretic, though he did not regard my solution with the same hostility with which he, like Cook-Wilson, regarded the views of James and Schiller. I am told that there is at present some revival of the interest in speculative philosophy; "If it be so, so be it". But I must work on my own lines: and that they are parallel to those of the great philosophers of France is surely in their favour.

But I shall not try to proceed in their logical and rigorous fashion. I do not write only for professed philosophers and theologians, though I am ready with all respect to submit my sketch to their judgment. But my appeal is to a wider circle. One may judge from recent dissertations in our newspapers that the reading public thinks that noted novelists are the best authorities on the subject of

religion. And one of them, Mr. Wells, would, I think, be quite ready if elected to sit on the throne of the Popes. I have no such self-confidence. All that I shall attempt is to set forth, in language which can be understood by ordinary educated people, what I regard as the true history and theory of Christian belief. And I must do this with extreme brevity, in spite of the warning which Sir J. R. Seeley once gave me: "You can either write summarily or at length: if you write at length no one will read you; if you write briefly no one will understand you". I have chosen to impale myself on the latter horn of the dilemma.

I will try as far as possible to use ordinary words and phrases, though I am aware that by so doing one is apt to be misunderstood. Words were invented, or rather arose, to meet the practical everyday necessities of life. They do not easily lend themselves to speculative thought. Every branch of investigation has invented technical terms, which abridge processes of thought, and state results with precision. Philosophy has done the same. Kant and his followers have done this in a high degree, and no doubt have attained their object. Many English and Scottish writers on the philosophy of religion have followed in their steps. But if one can explain one's meaning passably without the use of abstract philosophical language, it is surely better to do so.

II

The activist form of Christianity starts with belief in religion as a continuous and progressive inspiration. It accepts the teaching of physiology and psychology that it is the active powers of man which are the most fundamental and dominant. In the same way in the action on the world of humanity by the Spirit of God, it is the impulse, the call to action, which is fundamental. From that impulse arise systems of doctrine and creeds, organization and priesthoods, rites and sacraments. After a

slight sketch—it can be but very slight—of the history of Christianity from this point of view, I will return to the question of objectivity or absoluteness in religion. And I hope to show that by this road we may reach an objectivity which is adequate for human life and ethical progress.

We must begin by considering religion in its most primitive forms, since in such simple and unsophisticated phenomena, the main facts of religion will come out most clearly. We will start with the notion of *mana*, a word used in Melanesia to represent the supernatural, the power outside of and above man, which acts in the forces of Nature and on the human mind and will.

I must not spend my limited space in anthropological dissertations, in describing the religious notions of various tribes of savages and the terms in which they embody them. I will accept the definition of *mana* given by Dr. Codrington,[1] a great authority on Melanesian religion. He writes that it is "a force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil"—"a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses". "It works to effect anything which is beyond the ordinary power of man, outside the common processes of Nature".

This conception of a power outside men which may help or hinder them is by no means peculiar to the Melanesians, but exists among primitive peoples everywhere.

According to the universal belief of savages, the acquisition of *mana* is not for everyone. It would seem to be confined to those of a special nervous temperament. A certain amount of asceticism is also necessary, fasting and solitude in the first place, and abstention from sexual intercourse. Urgent physical desires have to be opposed and refined; a clean room has to be prepared for the

[1] I owe the quotation to Dr. R. R. Marett's most suggestive book, *The Threshold of Religion*.

entrance of *mana*, a field laid fallow in which its seeds may take root.

Similar notions as to the existence of diffused spiritual forces which man can acquire and use are the backbone of magic and witchcraft. The wizard gives all manner of names to his familar spirits ; he gains power over them by austerities ; he can by spells and incantations compel them to come and to perform his behests.

Man comes into the presence of these spiritual powers in pure selfishness. His only object is to acquire potency and to establish an influence over his fellows. Then, as he advances a little in civilization, a marvellous change takes place, a change perhaps the most momentous which has taken place in the history of mankind. Savages do not doubt of the existence of *mana*, but they do not regard it as moral or having character. In time it dawns on them that the spiritual powers are higher in type than mere men, that they have personality and purpose. The relation between the human and the superhuman is reversed. Men begin to feel that the spiritual powers need their aid, and that it is in the line of their own happiness and progress to furnish such aid. They become worshippers, and magic passes into religion. This is a process which may begin even among primitive peoples. An Eskimo medicine-man explained to Dr. Rosmussen, after insisting on the necessity of solitude and fasting for one who would acquire spiritual powers, that " a man does not become a wizard to serve his own ends, but because the powers of life and death have need of him for theirs ". So begins a process which grows and develops until we reach the great religions which have dominated mankind.

The earliest form of real religion as distinguished from animism and wizardry is that described by Fustel de Coulanges as an exchange of services. The votary brings to the deity offerings, performs sacred dances in his honour, builds him temples, and expects in return his help in the

affairs of life, protection against enemies and epidemic illness, fertility in the soil and fruitfulness in cattle and in children. Such exchange of services often takes the definite form of a covenant, which is binding on both parties. Even in the more advanced religion of Judaism we find much mention of a covenant between God and man, a reiteration of the confidence that if man will keep the divine laws and ordinances, God will protect him in the possession of the promised land. It is a crude way of expressing the conviction that God is on the side of righteousness, and that it is to man's highest interest to walk in His ways.

There has been much speculation among philosophers as to the origin of religion. Most of them have sought it in the region of thought. Some have found it in wonder at the processes and the powers of Nature, some in belief in ghosts and the continued life of ancestors, some in the attribution, during that primitive stage of culture which is called animism, of a life and purpose resembling those of man to animals, plants and even the material forces of Nature. But those who take an activist view of life, and hold that desire, purpose and will are more fundamental qualities of man than thought and speculation, will be disposed to find the real germ of religion in the belief in *mana* or rather in the disposition and desire of men to use *mana* for help in the attainment of their objects in life. If they thus use *mana* they will naturally try to find an explanation of its nature, whence will come mythology and cult. But thought comes in not at the root of religion, but as the stem grows, and puts forth leaves and flowers. Such needs as the desire of self-expansion and of propagation are the basic facts of the life of man, as of all other living beings. And as these primitive impulses lead men by degrees to knowledge of the physical world and its laws, so they lead them to the discovery of the spiritual world, of which at first he gains but a very dim and inadequate notion, but one which

contact with surrounding spiritual forces will gradually develop and correct. Nor does this imply invention of the deities. Man does not invent a material world, but discovers it by experiences pleasant or painful. Every age discovers more and more of its nature and laws. In the same way man discovers the spiritual world, at first in dim and blurred fashion, and by degrees his view of it becomes truer and more lofty.

In the development of *mana*, the gradually growing inspiration of life by the supernatural, we may trace three stages. At the lowest it is—I do not say immoral—but unmoral. The medicine-man who acquires it is not at once moralized by it. It is possible for him to use it for selfish purposes. In the second stage it is moralized, and men see that it can be used for good or for evil, but that it ought to be used for purposes in accord with the better tendencies of the race. In the third it is spiritualized, and it becomes the noblest function of man to approach it in reverence, and to work in union with it.

At the lowest stage, we have the remarkable fact that the medicine-man of the savage who acquires *mana* can use it for his own purposes. Has he then actual power over the spiritual forces? Can he compel them, as he fancies he can, to do his bidding? We have to face the facts however unpalatable, and follow the argument, as Plato says, whithersoever it leads. And the facts are clear. It is impossible, in face of the evidence, to think that the *mana* does always raise the character of the medicine-man, or that it tends only to good. The medicine-men are, like other men, good, bad or indifferent, and even when they are good, they only use their powers in accordance with the ethical standard of their race.

Here, I think, we may suggest a comparison, or rather a parallel, drawn from a more familiar field. The man of science, and the inventor who turns the knowledge of the man of science to practical purposes, makes discovery of laws and of powers in the physical universe, in the

province of chemistry or mineralogy or maybe in the constitution of the human frame. These discoveries he may use for a great variety of purposes. He may use them in a merely selfish way, to acquire wealth, or he may use them to promote human happiness or health, or to increase the length or the enjoyment of life. Or he may use them merely for material ends, the exploitation of the resources of the material world, without regard to the interests and well-being of the community. Or he may use them to increase the deadliness of the means of destruction in war, by inventing submarines or poison-gases. The knowledge which he gains may fairly be regarded as ultimately a revelation of the hidden secrets of creation given to him in return for long and self-sacrificing toil. As the *mana* of the savage is the reward of solitude and abstinence, so to the modern researcher comes his power over Nature in return for "scorning delights and living laborious days". And in the one case as in the other, the power thus acquired may be used for purposes good, bad or indifferent.

Nor is the source of the power really very different. In some cases it is manifested in practical life, in others in intellectual achievement; but will and intellect are but two manifestations of the same spiritual force, acting in individuals, but by no means bounded by their personalities.

The sense of surrounding spiritual powers is not a mere blind experience. Thought comes in, at first in crude attempts to explain the experience by means of myth or fancy, and later more systematically and reasonably. As the primitive myth decays it gives birth to rite and ceremony, to schemes of morality and of theology, to doctrine and to art. And from time to time there arises a man of religious genius, an inspired prophet, who makes great discoveries, and raises whole nations to a truer sense of the supernatural.

Let us pass by many stages in the growth of religion, and come at once to the noblest of the pre-Christian

religions, that of the Jews. It is now a commonplace that in the books of the Old Testament we may discern the stages of a progress which begins with the primitive notions of the most archaic strata in *Genesis*, and under prophetic influence is gradually refined and exalted until we reach the lofty theology of Amos, of Isaiah and of the Psalms. In some of the earlier passages we meet with curious customs such as those studied by Sir James Frazer in his *Golden Bough*. We find *mana* everywhere, whether residing in material objects, such as the ark of the covenant, or in specially chosen men.

It was through the religious passion and ethical enthusiasm of the prophets that the mission of Israel as a nation specially dedicated to God arose. The earliest of these whose writings are preserved to us is Amos, who lived in the eighth century B.C., and who began the movement which culminated in the book of Isaiah. There is nothing in all literature more striking than the passage in which Amos claims direct inspiration by the God of Israel. "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and a dresser of sycamore trees: and the Lord took me from following the flock; and the Lord said unto me, Go prophecy (or preach) unto my people Israel". At that time the legal code of the Jews, which in later time they regarded as the work of Moses, was in a fluid and unformed condition; we must not suppose that the priestly law preceded the prophets, as ordinary readers of the Bible would naturally think; but that it was a development in several successive stages, contemporary with the prophets, and greatly influenced by them.

The Spirit of God, who spoke by the prophets, is spoken of in the Old Testament as the source of all notable human excellence. It is said to have been by the aid of the Divine Spirit that Bezaleel, the son of Uri, gained wisdom to devise cunning work in gold and silver, and in the cutting of wood. Especially the leaders who defended the people of Israel against their enemies did so by gifts received

from the Divine Spirit, Samson by superhuman strength of body, Joshua by military skill and prowess, Solomon by wisdom which surpassed that of all his contemporaries. The Jewish belief is really the sublimation of the Melanesian view that *mana* "shows itself in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses".

The Psalms have been so completely adopted into Christianity that we usually read them in a Christian sense. In fact various Psalms belong to very different stages in religious development, from low to the highest. Let us take a noble utterance of Isaiah: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength". The term *the Lord* is, as is generally known, the term adopted in the Septuagint to render the Hebrew Jehovah or Yahweh. The Greek translators preferred a more general and human title for God to the Hebrew name, which had originally meant the tribal deity of the Jewish race. If we had to render the phrase I have cited into Melanesian, we should write it, "They that wait upon God shall renew their *mana*". The waiting implies patience, self-mastery, and prayer, the subordination of personal desires to a higher power.

But in the Jewish sacred writings a great change in the idea of spiritual power has taken place. The Jews believed, as do primitive peoples in general, that fasting and abstention, solitude and prayer, were almost necessary preliminaries to the reception of strength from the world of spirit. But the *mana* known to primitive peoples is neither moral nor immoral but essentially unmoral. The Jews, in virtue of their unique sense of the spiritual, introduced into the conception of deity two great characteristics. They recognized that God was one, and that He was on the side of righteousness. These two great teachings made the religion of Israel a thing by itself among ancient faiths. The unity of God made theology possible, the righteousness of God opened a way to ethics. Together these two great discoveries placed religion for

all time on a higher level. They can never in the future be lost sight of, unless man ceases to be a religious being. Leaving aside Hinduism and Buddhism, all the great religions of the world, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, accept these two theses as a basis.

The Jews, with all their faults, adhered steadily to the belief that God loves righteousness and hates iniquity, that He aids men in the pursuit of goodness, and punishes them if they go aside from the right path. Some of the heathen sects around them developed a fine mysticism, and surpassed them in their conceptions of the nature of the world and the destiny of human souls; but no other people was in the same way convinced that the Ruler of the Universe was on the side of right doing, that righteousness exalts a nation, and that wickedness cannot in the long run bring real and lasting happiness to any human being. And this conviction, passing into Christianity through the teaching, and still more through the life of the Founder, saved the world when Greek civilization decayed.

The two main strands of which Jewish religion was made are in this matter as in most matters strongly contrasted. The prophetic side of the religion had a strong grasp of the eternal, of the changeless conditions of the moral life. For that reason it is still living, and appeals to us in all the services of the Church. The other, the priestly side of the religion, was doubtless of immense value to the Hebrew race, which it preserved from contamination by the surrounding nations. It formed a hard shell to prevent the fervour of the love of God and of righteousness from radiating into space. And in some ways it still works, since early Christianity took over from the worship of the temple the idea of sacrifice, both donatory and propitiative, the idea of a priesthood, a code of observances. Christianity also needed a hard shell for its protection. But in the priestly religion there was far more of the temporary and evanescent than in the prophetic. This is obvious

to every reader of the New Testament. The writer to the *Hebrews* and St. Paul himself are unremitting in their insistence on the merely temporary and symbolical character of the Jewish ordinances which the Christian society was to spiritualize, and to carry to a higher level.

But it was not only among the Jews that there was developed a noble religion. The development among the Greeks was a parallel process, but standing in complete antithesis to that in Israel. We are accustomed to think of the Greeks as the masters of thought, the originators of high art, the teachers of science. But we scarcely think of them as religious. And no doubt the national religion and mythology of Greece, though they were of the greatest value as giving birth to poetry and art, were hardly religion in the modern sense of the word. And this natural Greek religion, beautiful as it was, was not closely connected with morality. The gods were so far humanized that they partook of human frailties and vices. Indeed, as is well known, in this matter Plato is extremely severe on the popular religion, and would not allow it a place in his Republic.

But there was another strain, parallel to the religion of the poets, the priests and the people, which had a place in the higher life of the race. As Jewish religion owed its upward turn, its sublimation, to the inspiration of the early prophets, Amos, Hosea and their successors, so Greek religion took a loftier and more ethical turn from the inspiration of Socrates. The brilliant literary genius of Plato, which is able to transform a dry philosophic discussion into a work of consummate art, has brought into such prominence the speculative side of his master's teaching, that he has thrown into the shade his more practical side, his inspiration and ethical passion. Only in a few of the Platonic dialogues, especially those connected with the death of the master, and occasionally in the duller narrative of Xenophon, is justice done to it. But it is perfectly clear that Socrates regarded himself

as the instrument and the mouthpiece of inspiration, a soldier sent out to fight to the death for high views of the divine in man. His calling to the prophetic office came from the highest religious source in Greece, the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. All through his life he had trances and visions of the divine. At the very end of his life, in obedience to a heavenly voice, he set about the writing of hymns, which unfortunately have been lost in the river of oblivion. And his death, which by a slight violation of what he regarded as duty he could have escaped, was in the strictest sense a religious martyrdom.

The immediate successors of Socrates were devoted rather to speculative than to practical philosophy, to thought than to conduct, with the exception of the Cynics, Antisthenes, Diogenes, and the rest ; and even these latter were regarded rather as eccentrics than as prophets, though the saying of Alexander the Great that if he were not Alexander he would be Diogenes, shows that genius was able to see beyond the squalor and filth of the Cynics, into their nobility of soul. But it needed the breath of a fresh inspiration from the East to turn the Greek mind seriously into the ways of a lofty faith. Zeno of Citium in Cyprus, of Phœnician origin, transmuted the best philosophy of his time into a real religion. What that religion was we can judge from the writings of Zeno's Stoic followers at Rome—Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Its ethics were harsh and severe, suited to the few rather than the many, but they stood in noble contrast to the degeneracy and dissolution of the time. Marcus Aurelius was the despotic master of the civilized world, Epictetus a lame slave ; yet their writings are astonishingly alike in character.

The ordinary view is that Stoicism was a man-made religion, in contrast to the God-given religion of the Jews, and that in it there was no place for a personal deity. Certainly the emotional elements of religion were held in severe discipline, and there was not in Stoicism any trace

of the ecstatic religion of the prophets. But in some points it was in line with the highest religious developments of all countries, and even of modern times. It held that man's highest duty is to take his assigned place in the universal life, to live not for himself but for his country and humanity. It taught a lofty doctrine of God, that God was the Father of mankind, that His Providence ordered all things on earth, that God was above all things and in all things; and that to be pleasing to Him was the end of all good action. But to soften the lofty doctrine of God the Stoics allotted to each man a guardian spirit to work under God for his virtue. They believed in the intrinsic beauty of moral goodness, and the need of a strict discipline in life.

The Stoic doctrine is indeed quite unlike the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, even more unlike in tone and character than in its actual precepts. But, as many writers, and especially Lightfoot, have pointed out, it has far more resemblance to the teaching of St. Paul. When Paul is insisting on the divine Fatherhood he follows in the track of Stoic philosophers. Some writers have gone so far as to maintain a borrowing on the side either of Seneca from Paul or of Paul from Seneca. This is probably a mistake. But Paul came from Tarsus, a stronghold of Stoic philosophy, and probably listened in his youth, very likely without conscious approbation, to the discourses of Stoic philosophers. Among ourselves many men, of noble life and character, are in their beliefs nearer to Stoicism than to Christianity. Lord Avebury, for example, in his pleasing work on the pleasures of life, quotes more frequently from the Stoics than from Christian moralists.

But the point which is of importance to us in the present place is one often overlooked. Epictetus is regarded as a great moralist and a heroic soul. But his inspiration is disregarded. Yet he quite distinctly claims inspiration. Here is a passage from the third book of his discourses

as edited by Arrian: "Now when you have once heard this discourse, go home, and say to yourself: It is not Epictetus who has told me these things (for how should he?), but some propitious God, by him". "Well, let us obey God, then, that we may not incur the divine displeasure". The disciple must not only be a hearer of the word, but a doer, if he would be a loyal subject of God.

The Founder of Christianity spent His days largely in the healing of disease through the divine powers which dwelt in Him, and many of His nights in the desert and solitude, in fasting and prayer. In a more obvious and external way it furnishes a parallel to the life of the Jewish prophet. But lines which are parallel to one another may be a vast distance apart. The sloe and the most exquisite plum are parallel. We may trace a line of development between the two, and the botanist may find resemblances. But the question of origin is quite apart from the question of value to mankind.

The Jewish prophets had vastly raised the conception of religion by closely connecting it with morality, and they had taught that inspiration was no mere blind power but represented the will of a righteous ruler of the world of spirit, a ruler in some ways like human beings, with will and purpose, but raised at an infinite height above human folly and weakness. They had even taught the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and His love for those who feared and obeyed Him. At first they regarded this love as confined to the Jewish race; but as time went on they rose nearer and nearer to the conception of a divine love which embraced all mankind.

III

These notions of the divine righteousness and the divine love were accepted by Christ and developed with infinite insight and tenderness. But, as theologians have generally

seen, it was not the teachings of Christ which saved the world. It was the spirit, the divine influence which inspired alike His teachings and His conduct, and of which He was the vehicle. It is impossible to understand the history of Christianity unless we suppose that in and through the person of the Founder a stream of influence from the realm of spirit flowed into the human world. In His parables Jesus sets forth clearly the working of this influence. Especially clear is the parable of the sower, in which the practical working of this spirit is explained. "The sower soweth the word." It is easy to misunderstand the phrase as concerned with preaching the doctrine of the divine kingdom. But that is not really the meaning. It is not the hearing, but the doing of the word which is effectual. We must remember that in the next generation Jesus Himself is spoken of as the Word of God incarnate. It is the spirit working through Christ which turned the lives of men to nobler purpose. And this influence was liable to constant interference from the cares of the world and the perverting force of riches. It is only in the good soil that it can take root. Very similar is the bearing of the parable of the leaven, which works unseen in the meal until the whole is leavened. Both of these images are essentially dynamic, they mirror no intellectual process, but a change in heart and life produced by direct divine influence.

Such influence worked through Jesus while He was present in the flesh. And after His departure it went on working. There was no break. As soon as the Founder passed away, the same influence which had inspired Him passed into the Apostles and into the Church which they founded. Especially it passed, through the means of a heavenly vision, into St. Paul, who was not a disciple of the twelve, but was determined to remain independent of them in a measure. This is a most remarkable fact; and nothing could better prove the divine reality of the inspiration. "The wind bloweth where it listeth and

thou canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth ; so is everyone that is born of the spirit." Doubtless the Apostles at Jerusalem were of the utmost importance to the rising religion. They preserved continuity and passed on the torch. But it was Paul who really continued the influence of his Lord most completely. It accompanied his missionary journeys and inspired his Epistles, which breathe the very spirit of Christ.

In the Gospels and Acts the influence which dwelt in the Church is spoken of in two ways. Sometimes, especially by Luke, it is spoken of as the power of the Divine Spirit ; and this rendering is accepted also at the end of the Fourth Gospel. But the great theologian who wrote that Gospel more often thinks and speaks of it as the continued life of Christ Himself in the Church. St. Paul uses both expressions : sometimes he speaks of the fruits of the Spirit, as manifested in the Church, and sometimes of the indwelling Christ who is the source of all its goodness. It is really two ways of speaking of the same set of religious experiences. Subsequent Christian philosophers and theologians elaborated schemes of doctrine in which the Son is carefully differentiated from the Spirit. But both the phrases in the New Testament are, as Matthew Arnold would have it, not scientific but literary, phrases " thrown out " at experiences too great and serious to be comprehended in words, words which are made to correspond to the daily necessities of life, and cannot fully contain spiritual ideas.

But the necessity for greater intellectual clarity soon became manifest. Even in the New Testament we may find the vestiges of the distinction between the Son and the Spirit. It is by the power of the Spirit that men become in a stricter sense children of God, that the Christ-life develops in them, and they are made part of the body of Christ, the whole body of believers, who continue on earth the life of Christ. St. Paul speaks of his converts as growing into Christ ; but he does not speak of them

as becoming part of the Spirit. The Spirit dwells in them, and they dwell in Christ, until at last the Apostle could say, " I live no longer, but Christ lives in me ".

In the book of *Acts* the Spirit is represented primarily as a force or power. It accompanies the apostles and missionaries ; sometimes it produces ecstatic utterance ; more often it inspires actions regarded as miraculous, the healing of diseases, the opening of prison doors and the like. When St. Paul encounters Elymas the Sorcerer at Paphos, he overpowers him by the force of the Spirit and strikes him with blindness. So also Simon Magus in Samaria, who had practised enchantments, when he encountered the apostles, was amazed at their power, and attempted by bribery to elicit from them the source of that power.

But according to St. Paul these exhibitions of mere power were the lowest and least spiritual of the workings of the Spirit. It breathed into the Christians divine gifts of faith, hope and love, of happiness and courage. Another gift of the Spirit on which he dwells with force and iteration is wisdom, a wisdom which is from above, purer and higher than any mere worldly wisdom, such as the Greek philosophers taught in porticoes and market-places.

But there is one thing which, as we well know, the Spirit did not do. It did not provide knowledge of scientific or historic facts, such knowledge as men gain by observation and reasoning. In such matters the inspired prophet might be not much better than his neighbours. The Jewish prophets often had very imperfect knowledge of the condition of neighbouring lands. In matters of science all prophets have been liable to error. We know of no kind of inspiration which preserves the prophet from intellectual mistakes. His mind works on the same lines as those of his contemporaries. It is involved in the perfect humanity of Jesus, which the Christian Church has always resolutely asserted, that He was subject to false opinion in some matters. He regarded, as did His

contemporaries, the Psalms as written by David, and the Pentateuch by Moses, views which are historically untenable. Even an orthodox theologian might admit this; and reply that it does not affect the quality of His inspiration. St. Paul also in his views of history is anything but infallible, is indeed sometimes crude. The Jews in his time hardly distinguished history from ethical myth. The notion that history could be a science, which arose in Athens in the fifth century B.C. and dominates the writings of Thucydides, and at a later time those of Polybius, had not penetrated the Jewish mind. So to St. Paul the Garden of Eden, the Fall of man, the manna in the wilderness were all historic; and he did not hesitate to use them as foundations for doctrinal construction. In the same way Clement of Rome easily accepted the mythical story of the phœnix, and used it as an argument to prove the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. Hence intricacies and entanglements which are still able to delay the feet of the Christian preacher and missionary.

I have traced, in all too brief and summary a way, the evolution of inspiration from its origin among savages to its consummation in the Christian Church. But at every step in the history there is a dark shadow which accompanies it. Even among medicine-men some use their power for good, and some for bad purposes. Magic may be white or black, kindly or malicious. The religion of the Jewish prophets was always struggling, sometimes with success and sometimes in vain, against the inferior and debased religions of the surrounding peoples, with their human sacrifices, their temple-prostitution, their greedy crowds of priests. And as *mana* grows by solitude and in the desert, so it is in solitude and the desert that malign spiritual powers have their seat. The votary who leaves his kin in the search for inspiration, and voyages to mountain or desert, is sure there to meet with evil impulses and tempting voices which would destroy his soul.

The classical example of this clashing of good and evil

is to be found in the Gospel narrative of the temptation of Jesus. It was His custom to retire into the desert for meditation and prayer, but it was in the desert that Satan assailed Him with specious offers of power and dominion. Obviously the narrative of the temptation cannot be sober history; it is a parable of the clashing throughout life of the good and the evil impulses.

When we survey the course of history we can discern, especially if we compare periods distant from one another, a course of evolution, a gradual progress in which the better supersedes the worse. But history is always an ideal construction which by means of high lights and deep shadows tries to give a human picture of the past. And when the worse is superseded by the better it does not perish, it is only driven beneath the surface and overlaid. It takes refuge among the more backward classes in a nation, and in the deep subconscious strata of the human mind, whence it is always ready to issue forth once more if occasion serve.

The doctrine summarily put forth in this little work is that the essence of religion, of the Christian religion as of all others, is spirit working from within, not imposed from without. And in human societies it works by the way of evolution, though the course of evolution is not, as in the material world, and in a lesser degree in the world of plants and animals, dominated by physical surroundings. It is a process which may be traced in history, going on from age to age, partly in the consciousness of individuals, and partly in the unconscious depths, on which consciousness floats. But the great crises in this evolution come from the illumination of remarkable personalities, who collect what is best in the religion of their surroundings, and set forward the course of religious life in a more or less changed direction.

The protoplasm of religion, if it may so by analogy be called, is the possibility of inspiration, the presence in all human societies and individuals of a possibility of

responding to the spiritual force, which is ever working in and around us. It is difficult to find a word to express this force, which shall not be question-begging or misleading.

In regard to religion, as in regard to biology and ethics, we may pose three views:

(1) That Christianity was a creation by God at a definite time, communicated to the world by Christ and his Apostles. This is the absolute view.

(2) That religion is a phantasy, which grows up in the course of human development, without adequate evidence, varying from race to race and period to period through processes of spontaneous variation, and survival of that which is best fitted to the environment. This is the extreme relative view.

(3) That religion has been evolved by the action of an inner force in life, through human personality, on the social and spiritual environment; but that such evolution has been controlled by divine power and purpose; and is at its best in the direction of the highest ideals. This is the activist or evolutional view.

CHAPTER VII

THE VALIDITY OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

I

EVERYONE who is inclined, according to the tendency almost universal among Broad Churchmen, to pay most attention to the psychological features of religion, to think that it is the motion of heart and will which signify far more than the acceptance of any creed, or the following of any system of ritual, is sure soon to meet with objectors who charge him with subjectivity. Any inward test of morality or religion, they will say, must be but a leaden rule. We need above all things, they will affirm, to strain after a standard not relative, but absolute, absolute truth, absolute morality, above all an absolute God, who is the Source of such standards, raised above the temporary and partial, dwelling in perfect light and perfect goodness.

My contention is that absolute existence, objectivity out of relation to human faculties and human experience, cannot be strictly proved as regards any of the things of which we become aware in the course of living. There is no way by which logically we can transcend ourselves, escape the conditions of our being, and wander among what philosophers have called *noumena*. Even the material frame of things, the world with all its phenomena, we cannot know except so far as it is given us in sensation and perception.

We might easily, arguing in a strictly logical way, agree with the many thinkers who have regarded sensuous experience as a mere hallucination or illusion, a cloud world which is ever vanishing. This, which we may roughly call the Berkeleian view, is continually reappearing among some of those who think carefully.

It is our active faculties, desire, hope, fear, love, which enable, or perhaps rather compel, us to construct out of perception a surrounding world, in constant contact with which we live, which satisfies or disappoints, attracts or repels us.

Probably this way of regarding the world of sense as illusion would be adopted by many, especially in hours of depression and disappointment, but for two facts.

In the first place, however unsatisfactory and subjective the world of sense may appear, it does exhibit in the highest degree order and method. To the merest dreamer it cannot seem wholly like a cloud prospect, since the clouds float and form, change their shapes in wholly unexpected ways, give constantly fresh perspectives, while the course of the material world is regular and consistent. Events happen just as they have happened before; the play of cause and effect is invariable. And we cannot help recognizing that it is not we who are the cause of this regularity of order; often we would be glad to change it if we could. And as it is wholly independent of our desires and our volition, we cannot but regard it as arranged not by us but for us, a scheme outside us and objective. When Dr. Johnson kicked a great stone in order to disprove the subjectivism of Berkeley, he did not proceed in a way recognized by philosophers, but rather in the fashion of the man in the street. Strictly speaking he proved nothing, for Berkeley and his followers were well aware what sensations and what perceptions would follow the kicking of a stone. Metaphysically his argument was worthless. Yet there was a real meaning in it. It is the intractableness of the objects of sense, the way in

which they resist the will and pleasure of men, which will always furnish the readiest proof of the independence of the material world. And by means of the repeated resistances of the objects of sense, men have learned the properties and laws of the world of sense, so that by studying Nature we learn to control it, and compel it to carry out our purposes in the world whatever they may be. If there were not in Nature this stubbornness and uniformity, if iron sometimes sank and sometimes floated, if the kicking foot occasionally met no resistance from the stone, we should not be driven into believing in the real and objective existence of the world of sense.

The phenomena of vision and touch offer a close analogy to those which I have mentioned. Through our eyes we learn the outlines of objects, their colours, their position in relation to one another. But the eyes do not, apart from inference, inform us as to their solidity. They give us two dimensions, but not the third. The third dimension we learn from touch, or rather what is called the muscular sense. We could not become aware of it but for our movements, our muscular strain, our active life. In this case also it is movement, activity, will, which fill up and interpret the testimony of the eyes, which without them would be merely kaleidoscopic. It is another illustration of the profound law that not goodness only but even knowledge cannot be imbibed from without, but must be largely developed from within, though of course not without contribution from without.

And in the second place we find in the course of living that other people have the same perceptions that we have; that the material world is to them just what it is to us. Here again strict logic is at fault. Even if we are driven, as described in the last paragraph, to believe in an independent world, and in the independent existence of our neighbours as parts of that world, we could never so far penetrate the surface of our neighbour's consciousness as to be sure that his perceptions were really similar

to ours. We see grass, and call it green ; that is, we class its impression upon us with other sensations we have received. But how do we know that our neighbours' perception of green is the same as ours ? In fact we cannot know it. If he is colour-blind his perception will be demonstrably different from ours. Probably in every case it will be slightly different, for complete similarity and perfect equality are almost unknown in Nature. Ruskin, whose senses were very keen, maintained that grass was not green but yellow, though we may here suspect an intentional paradox. Yet if green were not a sensation or perception fairly uniform in all normally constituted men, painting whether of pictures or of houses would become a mere chaos.

Through a multitude of such experiences we gain the conviction, not only of the existence of a multitude of other selves in the world, friendly or hostile, sympathetic or indifferent, but also of the radical similarity of these other selves to us ; that they have the same or similar perceptions and feelings, the same or similar desires and aspirations, similar purposes. And so life becomes, not a random dream, but an organized process. We recognize ourselves as members of a family, a tribe, or a race, cut off from others, in a sense, by the limits of personality, but yet in constant contact with them, a contact which modern psychology is disposed to regard as reaching down beyond the conscious life of the individual to the deeper unconscious life, which is far less personal and less separate from the general life.

It hence appears that the whole sense of objectivity, whether of the world of nature or of the world of other selves, is produced not by the working of the intellectual powers, but by the force of energy and will. Apart from purpose and will, by his mere intelligence, no one would gain more than a faint and feeble notion of an independent and external world. And the more purpose has to do with the matter the more intense becomes the sense of

objectivity. The man who is busily engaged in active work on material things, for example, building a boat or painting a picture, is not likely to let Berkeley's subjectivity dominate his powers or turn him into a dreamer. The man who is a social worker or a preacher is likely to live in a profound sense of the objectivity of other selves. It is even probable that in love between man and man or man and woman, an intense realization of the objectivity of the object of affection is a necessary element. Such realization is not a matter of intellectual conviction, but of strong feeling, which may even be carried to such a point that a man may almost lose his sense of personality in that of the beloved person.

I do not of course maintain that the intellectual powers have no share in producing the conviction of objectivity. Inference comes to the aid of will and feelings. What I do maintain is that intellect by itself would never produce the conviction that we are in the midst of a society of active, loving, willing beings, that will, purpose, character are the primary elements in man, and that thought and reason, however important, belong to a later and less profound stratum of being.

II

We come now to the real point to which our reasoning has but led up, which is this, that our knowledge of God is gained in the same way as our knowledge of the natural world and the world of human beings, and has exactly the same claim to objectivity and validity. If it cannot be definitely proved by reasoning that God really exists and works, no more can an external world be proved by reasoning. If the proof is ultimately practical, so the proof of the existence of other persons is also practical.

For the existence apart from and above self of a spiritual power or powers which can act in our lives and give us strength which is not our own, we have an almost infinite

amount of testimony. No savage tribe is so rude as to have no belief in such a power. And such belief goes on from stage to stage, all through history, sometimes advancing and sometimes retrograding, but on the whole showing marked progress. Hundreds of biographies exhibit a history of relations with the spiritual Power, of trust and confidence in its working, of ever-fresh discovery of its nature. It is a great world, in which the spirit of man makes ever-fresh voyages, reaching lands unknown before, and plumbing the depth of new oceans. The best chart of it that has come to humanity is the Bible ; the Bible that with all its shortcomings and inconsistencies is yet the incomparable guide to the seeker after God. And beside the Bible, though probably always in a measure dependent upon it, we have the words and the writings of a multitude of the best men of all Christian ages, most of whom would accept the well-known saying of Newman, that the two great and luminous realities in life are God and the individual soul. I will not dwell further on the witness of God set forth by great Christians, but pass on at once to the logical question: Granting that such witness was based on some experience of life, yet how can we be sure that it proves the being and the attributes of a Deity objective, and not merely set up by the subjective imagination of the votary ?

If to any of the great leaders and doctors of the Church this question had been put, they would probably have answered only with a smile. Their knowledge of God was probably so clear and luminous as to leave no room for doubt. That smile would be parallel to Dr. Johnson's kicking at the stone. It would not have metaphysical or logical value, but yet would stand for a reality, the reality being in the one case, as in the other, the sense of solidity, of definite resistances. The will of God could not be confused with human will, because it is constantly in opposition to it ; the divine ideas could not be human ideas because they are infinitely larger and higher. As in the

case of the world so in that of God there are found to be infinite possibilities, and experiences range behind range, so that a man might spend not one lifetime but many in exploration and discovery.

Our belief then in the external and objective existence of God rests upon the same basis as our belief in a physical world independent of us. It is practically objective, because God is not observed by the senses and not inferred by reason, but discovered by His independence of our wishes and His opposition to our wills, a stubborn reality with which we have to reckon. And it is universally subjective, because we find in the lives of men and in their testimony the same general experiences in religion which we have ourselves felt. It is of course true that the religious experience varies from age to age and from person to person. But in its general character it is the same. Many of the Jewish Psalms express it more perfectly than our hymns, many of which are founded upon them. And in a far more ancient literature, the sacred books of India and Persia, we have still essentially the same testimony. It is the test of practical objectivity which gives force and confidence to a man's belief in God. And it is the test of universal subjectivity which makes it more reasonable and ethical. For there is nothing in the world which is perfect ; all our beliefs are subject to many forms of delusion, or at least of illusion. Anyone may in consequence of defective interpretation of religious experience attain to unworthy beliefs about God. The divine impulses may be regarded as coming from cruel and immoral deities, or from saints, who perhaps never existed at all. A sincere character, a fine personality, are necessary for the right interpretation of religious experience, and in every case intellectual errors are almost unavoidable. Unless divine inspiration were a reality, unless there was a light which lightens every human being, religion might constantly fall and be degraded until it became a power not for good but for evil.

But we must not exaggerate. Though it is true that God is perceived in experience as the external world is perceived, and shown to be objective in the same way as that world is shown to be objective, by practical life and the necessities of action, yet there are differences between the two cases which must be carefully and impartially considered. Indeed the fact that to many or most people such statements would seem to be mere paradoxes shows that we must not stop at that point, but follow the argument farther.

Laplace the astronomer, when speaking to Napoleon about the existence of God, said that he had no need of such a hypothesis. And no doubt science as such, in all its many branches, does not deal with ultimate realities; it is content to arrange facts and to show their relations one to the other. But we are speaking not of God as a hypothesis, not of the idea of God, but of God in human experience.

One main difference between belief in an external world and belief in God is in the extent or universality of experience. No one doubts the reality of the world about us, the Berkeleian philosopher no more than the man in the street. Some of the sages of Eastern Asia may try to extinguish the belief, and do so in a measure, but they can only do so by a practical withdrawal from every kind of active life, since, as I have observed, not action only but even sentiment involves a belief in objectivity. But a large proportion of mankind does, whether consciously or unconsciously, reject belief in God as a living and inspiring power. No doubt, as belief in God is the result of an active and vital process, and not of a mere process of reasoning and inference, so disbelief in God is usually the result of some vital process, of some disappointment or disillusion. This is shown in a multitude of biographies, and it is very usually the result of the discovery that God is not such as the person in the biography had believed Him to be. The adherent of any

religion, when he finds that God is not the being whom that religion has set forth, will fall suddenly, as a growth of ivy will fall when the tree which supported it has become rotten and has collapsed. This is the nemesis of institutional religion. But those who believe in relative or evolutional religion will not be liable to such a fall, as they will hold that in every form of religion there is a large human element mixed with fundamental truth; and that it is our business when our particular form of faith is shown to contain error, not to throw it away in disgust, but to prune it that it may still bring forth flowers and fruit.

It must of course be allowed that the faculty of discernment of the spiritual power in life is nothing like so universal as are the outward senses by which we become conscious of the material world. It may be called a second sight. Probably as a potentiality it exists in all men, but it is developed in few, and in very various degrees. Victor Hugo's comparison of the man who denies God with the man who denies the sun, because he is blind, goes too far, because a blind man who could not see the sun would feel its warmth. A better comparison for the denier of God would be with one who is colour-blind, an individual who is generally normal, but has a deficiency in one direction. It is notable that those who are colour-blind often obstinately deny their defect, and declare their sight to be quite good; and probably many colour-blind people go through life without knowing that they are abnormal.

We see in the biological world that some kinds of plants and animals are more susceptible to the vital tendencies which act in raising those kinds to a higher level. It is the same in the human world. Some nations seem destined to bring in higher notions of the divine, and a nobler range in conduct. Some men seem set apart by divine Providence to receive and transmit impulses which tend to the moralizing and raising of the race. The utterances

of such men may be formed into a body of sacred literature. Or they may found societies in which their spirits live on through many generations. They have a certain heaven-given authority.

People differ very greatly one from another in the efficiency of their eyesight. But the efficiency of any eyes may be vastly increased by the use of artificial aids, spectacles, the telescope, the microscope. Is there in the spiritual world anything which corresponds to these aids? It seems to me not far from the mark to compare with them the exercises set forth by all religions, solitude, common worship, prayer, sacred rites or practical philanthropy. But in any case the great natural difference in capacity for perception in individuals must persist, and it is this difference which is the foundation of standard or classical works in religion. Inspired men may speak not only to their own age, but to all times.

It is of course an absurdity to suppose that we have to choose only between the religion offered us by the great constituted authorities in the Church and our own individual religious experiences. These latter must have for each of us a direct authority greater than can be exercised by any teacher or by any Church. But no one who was not self-confident to the borders of insanity could imagine that his own personal experiences did not need interpretation and correction from those of the great masters and teachers of Christendom.

At this point again the analogy with the phenomena of sensuous perception becomes clear. We are obliged to value the testimony of our own eyes and ears more than any statements of other people. But no one save a lunatic would refuse to believe in the existence of objects which he had not himself seen. Through his own organs of sense he interprets what others tell him; but he learns naturally, in the course of living, to accept testimony as to the facts of the world, unless he has definite reasons for rejecting it.

To take a simple example. Few of us have, through our senses, acquired a knowledge of the physical and social facts of New Zealand. We know them by testimony only. We have the right, when anyone tells us of New Zealand, to test what he says by what we have learned by experience of the world of sense, and to reject, at least provisionally, what seems in direct contradiction with our experience. If anyone told us that in New Zealand iron floated on the water and feathers sank, we should be sceptical. And further, we should compare what our new informant told us with the testimony of travellers of proved veracity. It is much the same with testimony as to spiritual experience.

Even the Roman Church, which is especially distrustful of the religious experience of individuals, is in the final resort only able to appeal to religious experience, as recorded in Scripture, in the writings of great saints, or in the decrees in which the Church sums up the experience of her members. These records are of unmeasured value for testing the apparent inspirations of individuals, but they certainly do not prove them to be generally delusive.

If we turn from the cognitive to the ethical side of life, we at once discover a parallel. Just as a person insanely sceptical, a solipsist, might conceivably refuse to believe anything which transcended his own experience, so an insanely selfish man might refuse to recognize any rule of action but his own personal interest, his needs and desires. It is only by transcending the personal point of view, by love or hatred, by sympathy or disgust, that he enters into the ethical world, and becomes a man rather than a wild beast. The farther he gets from complete selfishness, the more he learns to subordinate himself to the good of others, the richer his life will grow. And it is only by subordinating his own will to that of the ruler of the world of spirit that he grows in a still higher sense, that he postpones his own wishes and desires, not only to those of

relations, friends and neighbours, but to those of the great Creative Spirit.

III

We now reach a farther stage in our argument. If it be conceded that by religious experience we reach a spiritual Power, a Deity, who is objective, or even absolute, yet this is not enough. We want to be assured that this Power, external to us, and reached not by metaphysical argument but by will and feeling, is not only powerful but good. Most people will think that to believe in a cruel, a tyrannous, an immoral deity is worse than to believe in none. How are we to reach, not only God, but the attributes of God ?

We recur naturally to our previous parallel. The question which we are raising would seem at first sight to be out of place in regard to the material world. Experience in that case shows us the attributes or qualities of material things, and we do not differ in regard to them. We do not find that one man will regard iron as hard and another man will regard it as soft, that one man will find that air is composed of oxygen and nitrogen, and another man will find it to consist of oxygen and hydrogen. So as regards the ordinary experiences of the material world there are no differences of opinion. It must however be added that in regard to the constitution, not the mere obvious qualities, of matter the theories of physicists differ widely ; and in this matter the recent course of discovery has brought about great changes of view.

But speaking roughly, and not refining, we may say that people in general are agreed as to the sensations and perceptions of material objects in the world.

When however we pass on to the second of the spheres of knowledge of which we have spoken, other human beings, experience is by no means so uniform, or opinions so consonant. We can all agree that the body of a person

is tall or short, his complexion fair or dark, his muscles hard or flaccid. But as regards his character there may be the most varied opinions; and in fact a great part of the ordinary social talk among civilized peoples is taken up with the discussion of the characters of friends and acquaintances. Some will regard A or B as selfish, some as only reasonably cautious, some may regard him as foolhardy, others as only courageous, and so on *ad infinitum*. But it would never occur to the most sceptical of mortals on that account to doubt of his objective existence, or to say "he cannot be both selfish and unselfish, both rash and wisely brave; so for my part I do not believe that he really exists: he is a mere phantom of the brain". After all, he is an existent being, differently regarded by various people.

In the same way, that men widely differ in their beliefs about God does not in the least prove that He does not exist objectively. Rather it would seem to prove the opposite; that God can be looked at from so many points of view and stand out as objective when regarded from any of them, seems to show His independence of individual or general thought, a reality above and beyond thought.

There is one fact about the Deity that is recognized alike by savage and by civilized men, that He is a power, over and above the forces of the material world, in close contact with the wills and feelings of votaries, and yet quite independent of them. All recognize that He can help or hinder their purposes, give them strength and wisdom, make their lives successes or failures.

But when we pass beyond this fact we at once come on to differences of opinion. There is a great deal of subjectivity in the interpretation of Deity. Beyond doubt, all sorts of men do judge of Him in great degree from their own feelings and ideals. In particular men very usually attribute to their Deity the qualities which they find in their rulers, or indeed in any men whom they highly esteem. If lions had a god, they would think of him as

a super-lion. When warlike and bloodthirsty races think of God, they naturally regard Him as revengeful, delighting in bloody rites and swayed by fierce likes and dislikes. Those who live under the uncontrolled government of kings or chiefs will tend to think of God as an absolute ruler, making His mere will a law to be followed under cruel penalties, punishing not only men hostile to Him, but all their relatives, and their families to several generations. Philosophers will speak of a God who is sublimated reason, philanthropists of one who is above all things gentle and loving. Puritans will dwell most on His severity, artists on His beauty, lawyers on His unchangeableness.

And sceptics will proceed to say that God is a mere emanation from human thought and desire, that man makes God in his own image, and falls down in worship before the work of his own hands or brain. But is the proceeding of the sceptic any more legitimate in this case than in the case of a human being who is variously interpreted? When judging of men, a lustful man will suspect everyone of lewdness, a man naturally ungrateful will think that everyone else is ungrateful, and a coward will not readily believe in tales of unselfish courage. And men judge in the same way of God. As the Psalmist well puts it, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with the perfect man thou wilt show thyself perfect; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the perverse thou wilt show thyself froward". The eternal and living God may be approached by many paths and interpreted in many ways.

There would have been a chaos of interpretations of God, if He had not been willing to reveal Himself to man, potentially to every man, actually through chosen servants and interpreters. Such interpretation may come through events in the natural world, or crises in the affairs of nations and societies. But it usually comes to the interpreters from within, through the working of immanent

Deity in the heart, the thought and the will. As the writer of *Hebrews* says, God spake by the Jewish prophets, and, we may add, by the Greek philosophers. In every age and to every people God reveals something of Himself. "God fulfils himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world." In this saying there is profound truth. God reveals Himself in part only. There cannot be a perfect and complete revelation. For it is through personality that the revelation comes, and no human personality is a clear untinted medium. There is always a human element in revelation. What Bacon calls *idols*, the characteristics of the age, of the country, of the individual, come between the source of revelation and the utterance to the world. And thus infallibility is avoided, infallibility which is ever destructive of the highest powers of man, which would result in making him a mere parasite, and crushing by its weight all moral and volitional striving.

It will be said, no doubt, that there is an exception to this law; that once in history, through the perfect personality of Christ, the divine light shone undistorted upon mankind. If Jesus, like Mohammed, had composed a written book, and passed it down the ages in His Church, there would have been a document recognized by all Christians as final and infallible, which could not vary from age to age, and to which all could have appealed as a final authority. And the infallibility would have been a crushing weight on the Church. Even so, no doubt, the revelation must have been conveyed not only in human language, but as moulded by the intellectual forces of the age when it came. Yet it might have been a weight so heavy as to have closely limited the thought and activity of Christendom, and to have been a mark for all the enemies of the Church to aim at.

Fortunately, or as I should prefer to say by divine Providence, this has not been the case. The words of Christ come down to us not in any final or authorized

form. They have to be collected from the Gospels, which are often inconsistent one with another, which are the work of disciples as to whom we know very little, and which have greatly suffered in transmission. The Second Gospel comes down to us in a mutilated form; the character and authorship of the Fourth Gospel is a matter of constant speculation by the learned. No view put forward in regard to its authorship and character by recent scholars has met with universal approval. But one may fairly say that the notion of the early Christians that it was the actual composition of St. John would not now pass among trained theologians. But of course the great majority of Christians have not had a critical training. They judge the sayings of the Founder reported by the Evangelists by an inner light, a light which makes them cling to some of them with the greatest tenacity and reverence, and pass by others which do not appeal to them in the same way. And a wise man would not wish it to be otherwise. The spirit of Christ speaks to the spirits of men through the written word, and becomes a revelation to them. Thus we can never cite the reported words of Jesus as decisive of any ethical or spiritual question; there will always be a doubt whether they are rightly reported. Thus we escape from under the crushing weight of infallibility, and preserve our moral freedom. Such private interpretation does no doubt lie open to much abuse; and men who are determined to interpret only in the light of their own intellectual training or ethical tendency may reach extravagant results. The true corrective is deference to the general feeling of the Christian Church, in which the spirit of Christ still dwells, though not limited by any particular organization. But if we were limited by past Councils of the Church we should drift again under the shadow of infallibility.

I must briefly sum up the substance of this discussion.

Religious experience is the great and indispensable basis of belief. It bears the same relation to the spiritual

life which the senses bear to life in the visible world. And the knowledge which it gives of God and the spiritual world is no more subject to the reproach of subjectivity than is the knowledge gained by the senses. In strict logic we cannot pass beyond phenomena to realities, either in the world of sense or in the world of spirit. But in both worlds, if we cannot attain to metaphysical certainty we are able by experience to attain to what is sufficient for living, that is, to practical objectivity and universal subjectivity. We have the same right to believe in a real and objective Deity that we have to believe in our house or our city, in our friends or our relations.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

I

I HAVE sketched the development of *mana* in the history of religion. We have seen that it passes through three stages. In the first, *mana* is regarded as unmoral, having no relation to ethics; this is the view of savage peoples. In the second stage, of which the religion of Israel and that of the Stoic philosophers are the best examples, it is closely related to ethics and conduct. In the third stage we have the Christian development, which has prevailed since the beginning of our era in Europe, at all events in the guiding classes.

But spirit is very hard to define, and scarcely to be observed in its essence; we have to study it in its manifestations in society, just as we can only judge of the spirit of a man by listening to him, by looking at his face, and even by observing his clothes and his house. To vary the comparison, we may think of the Christian *mana* as the oxygen in the air which we breathe, which is the source or nourisher of all energy and power. But we cannot, except for a few minutes, breathe unmixed oxygen; before oxygen can become the support and condition of everyday life it must be mixed with nitrogen to constitute an atmosphere suited to humanity. So the Christian spirit, which is the source of energy and goodness, has to be incorporated in rational forms of doctrine, in reasoned

ethics, in organized Churches, in rites and ceremonies, in architecture and art. All these are visible and audible; they impress our ordinary senses; and without them Christianity would become too vague and ghostly to have much power over people in general.

All these outward manifestations arise from the working of the Spirit under various conditions. Forms of doctrine and creed are conditioned by the intellectual surroundings; Church organization depends upon social conditions, architecture and rites upon æsthetic conditions. Where conditions are stable, these may keep their form for long periods; when the conditions change rapidly, they may share the mutability; and often they may pass through strange and unexpected phases.

In such an aspect does Christianity present itself to those who believe in evolution and its corollary relativity. But as yet the great majority of Christians look at their religion from the dogmatic not the relative point of view. They regard doctrine and the creeds as the expression of eternal and immutable truth. They think that the external form of the Church, its organization, was regulated once for all by the Founder and His Apostles. They regard the rites and sacraments of the Church as of external and eternal obligation. They consider that the great proclamations of relativity in the Gospels refer only to the temporary features of the Jewish religion. When Jesus said "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath", He was expressing the essential nature of all religious observances. But many readers suppose that the saying was meant only to indicate that the Jewish Sabbath was a temporary and passing institution. When He said "By their fruits ye shall know them", He was putting into words the great principle that religious beliefs were to be tested and finally judged by the kind of conduct which they inspired. But many readers suppose that He is only cautioning His followers to beware of hypocrisy in those who professed to have a religious message.

Those who accept the doctrine of relativity will see that religion, like anger, like enthusiasm, like love, works from within outwards. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man." A religion, like a human babe, is born without clothing, but it soon acquires, through the necessities of action, an outward form.

In the present chapter we have to consider the character of Christian doctrine. We have to compare the *à priori* and dogmatic system of doctrine accepted by the scholastic philosophy, with the comparative and evolutional view which alone is suited to the conditions of our own age.

If we approach the idea of an absolute Deity from the side of the speculative reason, the result is baffling. Absolute, as I have already observed, logically stands in opposition to relative, and in that sense of the word, there seems to be no approach to such a Deity which is logically feasible. For all our knowledge and all our perceptions are relative; we can only know anything under the forms of human perception. Thought can never pass beyond relativity. There have been put forward in ancient times attempts to prove the existence of an absolute Deity by the analysis of thought, by the road of speculative metaphysics. It has been held that the relative implies the absolute, that the idea of infinite perfection implies the existence of such perfection. It was the great merit of Kant to show the worthlessness of such arguments, to demonstrate the relativity of knowledge, and to prove that the mere analysis of thought cannot lead to knowledge of what exists. In recent times there have been various attempts to dispute the reasoning of Kant, and to rehabilitate the metaphysical proof of the absolute. Such attempts may from new points of view turn the flank of Kant's position; indeed in his doctrine of the Practical Reason he showed a way round his own flank.

But his position cannot be stormed by a direct attack. The only Deity who can be in fact known must be a Deity discovered by human faculties, and having relation to man and nature only, not an absolute Deity in the strict sense of the word.

But it is quite possible for a man who has studied the divine working in the world of nature and of man, and thus reached views as to the nature and the activity of God, to pause at the limit of his knowledge and see beyond that limit a vision of infinite power and goodness. Thus he may reach out to a transcendent God, and he may say with the Psalmist, "As the heaven is higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts". But any study of such a transcendent Deity belongs not to the pedestrian understanding but to the winged raptures, the consuming love, of the Mystics. Recluses and saints in all ages have thought that in certain mystic states they have been able to enjoy a direct vision of God. But even when they have attained to that vision, they have not been able to put forth any statement as to the divine being which will bear analysis, and which can be placed on terms with our ordinary knowledge. Their ecstasies have been formless raptures, which have often had a great power over all their future lives, but the effort at expressing them to be found in the writings of the saints must be interpreted not by the mind so much as by the emotions and the will.

In the ordinary course of life ordinary people are often conscious of aid which comes from a spiritual source, enlightening the mind, inspiring higher purpose, giving strength to the will. People of higher spiritual nature are no doubt more open to such inspiration than ordinary persons. But it does not convey to anyone a clear and logical perception of the source whence it comes. If we consult the history of religion, nothing will be clearer than this. The variety of spirits and deities to whom

their votaries attribute help and inspiration is infinite—heathen deities, spirits of the dead, earth spirits, Christian saints and so on. It is evident that divine impulse, when it comes into human life, comes through no translucent medium, but through a great variety of coloured glasses.

There is a strong tendency in most religiously minded men to shrink from claiming a direct relation with God, to place between the supreme Deity and themselves some mediator through whom the influence comes. Thus in the Old Testament we find frequent mention of the Angels of God, the Spirit of God, the Word or Wisdom of God. To this tendency severe monotheists are apt to object, and even to regard it as the worshipping of idols. And if it is carried so far that God Himself is obscured or thrust aside, it may deserve censure. But if it merely amounts to this, that a true and eager worshipper of God thinks that some spiritual messenger is sent to him to help and direct him in the divine way, this involves no lowering of the idea of the Deity, though it may bring in danger of superstition.

In the Bible, that great repertory of inspiration through successive ages, the relative character of God is dwelt upon more than His transcendence. It is the working of God in the visible world, in history, and in the individual soul that is the constant theme. And the higher the level of the inspiration, the more strikingly is this the case. In the book of Job, which, however splendid as poetry is not very definite in its morality or its theology, God is spoken of in vague and indefinite terms. But in a later age the Psalms are full of the divine relativity, of the dealings of God with man and His continual relations to the souls of those who come into His presence and seek His aid. In the Gospels this is still more the case. God appears as far closer to man, and in more constant touch with him. They are an inimitable textbook of the nature of God, and of His dealings with mankind.

The notion of doctrine as relative, as an evolution in

time, is the result of the adoption in religious history of methods taken from biology.

The evolutional theories of Lamarck and Darwin in the last century introduced into biology the idea of continuous biological development as opposed to the idea of special creations, that is, they substituted a relative for an absolute point of view. At first, as some of us can well recollect, the Darwinian views were bitterly opposed by many on religious grounds. Not only did they conflict with the account of creation in *Genesis*, but they seemed to set forth an atheistic account of the development of plants and animals ; the struggle for existence, spontaneous variation and survival of the fittest appearing to exclude divine power from the world-process. In some places, far from the currents of contemporary thought, the name of Darwin is still held in horror.

But subsequent writers have combined evolutionary theories with belief in the divine origin and control of evolution. They have still believed in creation, but held that it is a gradual process, rather than one which took place at a definite time in the history of the world. They regard the successive races of plants and animals as good not absolutely, but relatively to their environment.

But the doctrine of relativity, especially in its evolutional form, has passed from biological science into the sciences which are concerned with humanity, history and all the sciences which are connected with history, and into the provinces of conduct, ethics and religion. Here we are bound to be more specific. Let us take ethics as an example.

Three views may be held as to ethics as the science and the art of conduct.

(1) That the laws of ethics were laid down once for all by divine authority, whether that authority was embodied in a book of law or in a corporation. It is a question, if once the authority is recognized, of command and obedience. This is the absolute view.

(2) That ethics are fluctuating and unstable, determined by outward conditions, physical and social; that in ethics as in bodily forms there is a process of competition and survival of the fittest. This is the relative view in its extreme form.

(3) That although the notions of morality vary from period to period, and are in a measure governed by external conditions, yet their succession is not wholly swayed by such conditions. There is a limit and norm imposed on them by the fixed elements in human nature. And it is reasonable to believe that they are under divine control, that God has ideals for man, and gradually reveals them to man through the teaching and the lives of inspired prophets.

This is obviously a mediating view, combining belief in evolution with belief in divine government of the world. And every theist will believe that the nations and the individuals who believe in divine control will in the long run be the better and the happier for doing so.

This is the activist or progressive view of ethics. In the field of religion, and particularly in the matter of the existence and attributes of God, we shall find the same phenomena.

Some will hold that God can be known only through a revelation of Himself committed to a book or a Church, a final and authoritative revelation, which may be accepted or rejected, but must not be criticized. Some will hold that the belief in any deity is a delusion, and a projection of the human imagination. In proof, they will detail the infinitely various conceptions of God which have from time to time gained currency among mankind. But others will hold that God is revealed in various periods and through special prophets; but that on the whole, the revelation grows clearer with time. But there must always in revelation be a temporary and passing element, since it is through human thought and character that it is made.

The subject which most fully occupied the intellectual

faculties of the leaders of the early Church was the nature of the Founder and His relation to God. The thread of Christological speculation runs through the Christian writings after the first. There is a considerable variety in the views expressed on the subject in Gospel and Epistle. Starting from the Jewish view that Jesus was the son of David and the Messiah promised by the prophets, proceeding to the two alternative early theories that He was miraculously born of a virgin, or that He was adopted by God at His baptism, and then endowed with the Holy Spirit, the Church went on to formulate the homoousian and the homoiousian subtleties, until it found rest in the formulæ of Nicæa and Chalcedon. And it is probable that the solution then reached was generally acquiesced in, not because it was agreeable to all, but because in the decay of civilization and the advance of barbarism the power of subtle thinking and of the logical development of thought decayed. For the Nicene formula itself is capable of a multitude of different interpretations; and the "Athanasian" formula, which professes to interpret it, leaves it in fact quite unexplained, merely buried under a great heap of inconsistent phrases.

The turbulence in some of the Councils is notorious. Sometimes there was a free fight between parties. Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, is said to have died of wounds received at the Council of Ephesus. If we apply the maxim of Christ that deeds are the real test of the truth of doctrines we shall be suspicious of the truth of doctrine thus established. Historians say that often in Byzantine times the spread of a particular form of heresy in a country was only a way of asserting the independence of that country in regard to the central power of the Empire.

Christianity must have perished in these disputes and wars but for two things. The Gospels and Epistles survived, so that it was always possible to revert from the confusion of the present to a standard set up in the earliest age of Christianity. Christianity could always do what species of

plants and animals do when they have fallen into an impossible condition, it could revert to type. And in the second place, the spirit of Christ; the Christian *mana*, always went on working in some parts of the Church, inspiring the life of hermits in their cells, of missionaries who went out to persecution and death among the barbarians, of monks in their cloisters, who kept alive amid all vicissitudes something of the original inspiration.

When, towards the close of the dark ages, the human intellect began again to function, we find the beliefs of the Church a battleground of the rival sects of Scholastics. The systems of Plato and of Aristotle divided the learned; and finally with Thomas Aquinas the Aristotelians got the upper hand, and the scholastic doctrine of the Trinity became settled, apparently for all time, for the Church of Rome. At what stage in the long and troubled history of doctrine, eternal and immutable truth came in, would be a curious matter of inquiry. It is more reasonable to think that some of the many facets of spiritual truth were more visible in some ages, and other facets in other ages; but not truth as a whole in final expression, since realities can never be enclosed in our clumsy words, which are capable of fully expressing only the more obvious and superficial aspects of truth.

Then came the Reformation. Originally it was a protest, not against the doctrine of the Nicene Creed, but against the practical abuses of the Roman Church, against the selling of pardons and indulgences, the simony of the clergy and the arrogance of the prelates. As regards even the Sacraments, Luther did not greatly depart from Roman teaching, though no doubt Calvin and Zwingli went farther. But disputes about doctrine arose at once; and their ground was removed from the doctrine of the nature of Christ to a more psychological ground, the doctrine of the Atonement, the relation of faith to works, of free-will and predestination, of the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the like. As regards these subjects there was an

enormous volume of controversy, flowing on without cessation in the sixteenth and following centuries. But the Church never as a whole formulated any creed in regard to them; various views were held by the different branches into which the Western Church separated. There was no parallel activity in the Eastern Churches, which remained satisfied with the Nicene Creed, interpreting it with great subtlety. In the English Church, the formulation of the XXXIX Articles stereotyped in 1562 the theological or doctrinal views which she adopted and maintained. They represent a compromise, but are nearer to the views of the Reformers than to those current in the Roman Church after the Jesuit reaction.

The three great periods of the formulation of doctrine of which I have spoken each reflect the mental condition of the time. The first was contemporary with the last bloom of Greek philosophy. The second was contemporary with the revival of Aristotelian wisdom, partly under Arabian influence, in the Middle Ages. The third was contemporary with the dawning of modern philosophy in the West and North of Europe.

II

In a remarkable passage in his *Development of Christian Doctrine*[1] Cardinal Newman describes the process by which *ideas*, as he calls them, make their way into Christian belief and practice. The word idea is perhaps unfortunate, because it is closely connected with thought and speculation. It might have been better to speak of them as impulses or revelations, for they are active principles, not mere intellectual beliefs.

"When some great enunciation is carried forward into the public throng of men, and draws attention, then it is not merely received passively in this or that form into

[1] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, chap. i, sec. i, abridged. Quoted in Gardner's *Growth of Christianity*, p. 250.

many minds, but it becomes an active principle within them, leading them to an ever-new contemplation of itself, to an application of it in various directions, and a propagation of it on every side. At first men will not fully realize what it is that moves them, and will express and explain themselves inadequately. After a while some definite teaching emerges; and as time proceeds, one view will be modified or expanded by another, and then combined with a third, till the idea to which these various aspects belong will be to each mind separately what at first it was only to all together. It will, in proportion to its native vigour and subtlety, introduce itself into the framework and details of social life, changing public opinion, and strengthening or undermining the foundations of public order. Thus in time it will have grown into an ethical code, or into a system of government or into a theology, or into a ritual, according to its capabilities. It grows when it incorporates, and its identity is found, not in isolation, but in continuity and sovereignty. It is elicited and expanded by trial, and battles into perfection and supremacy."

It shows the greatness of Newman, that before Darwin had set forth his theory of evolution, a foretaste of it appears in the *Development of Christian Doctrine*. That the writer did not perceive the full bearing of his views and stated them in a one-sided way only shows that he was human. No man can ever bring forth great philosophical views which require no alteration or expansion in future ages.

The fate of Newman's theory of development has been remarkable. It has been operative in England in bringing many converts to the Roman Church. It has been powerful in the war against Protestantism, which it has laboured to represent as fossilized in contrast to the self-adaptation of Rome to new conditions. But the Roman hierarchy itself has never looked on Newman's views with favour, but has distrusted their tendency.

And in fact they are not reconcilable with the teaching of intellectually absolute religion to which the Roman Church is irrevocably committed. They have been carried farther by certain Romanist writers, such as Loisy and Duchesne, whose works have found a place in the *Index*.

It is impossible here to set forth the weaknesses and inconsistencies which have naturally arisen from the attempt to combine views which are essentially relative with the unchanging system of Rome. I have attempted to do this in another work, *The Growth of Christianity*,[1] to which I must refer any readers who wish to follow up the controversy. It is undeniable that the Church of Rome has shown in the past a certain power of self-adaptation to surrounding conditions, which power is the secret of her remarkable vitality. But Newman did not recognize that the development of the Church, at all events in the earlier ages, was really biological and not logical. It did not progress and conquer through a gradual unfolding of beliefs implicitly contained in the Apostolic teaching, but by assimilation of that which was without. In the New Testament there is no trace of Virgin Worship, of a sacerdotal class, of a materialist interpretation of the Sacraments. The whole character of the teaching of Jesus as reported by the Synoptic writers is a complete antithesis to the Roman system. In the course of its growth, as the Church baptized men good and bad, so it absorbed from the Gentile world elements of evil as well as of good. The attempt of the Reformers of the sixteenth century to revert to the original type, and to reject the accretions unworthy of the Church was, however mistaken they may have been in some respects, a noble endeavour. We in the new age are called upon to repeat the effort, with greatly increased knowledge of history, of the world

[1] Pp. 249–70. I must add that Mr. Addis, a clergyman who followed Newman into the Church of Rome, and afterwards returned, told me that he regarded my criticism of Newman as sympathetic and sound.

and of mankind. But our effort must be as strong a solvent of the hard dogmatic creed of the Roman Church as was that of Luther and Calvin and Zwingli.

Some Christian doctrines seem to one age fundamental, to another age almost immaterial. In all cases they have to be formulated in the language provided by the intellectual conditions of the age. To illustrate these truths we need not go beyond the Prayer Book. There we find the creed of the fifth century as formulated at Nicæa and Chalcedon. Beside it is set forth the creed of the age of the Reformation, which is formulated in the Articles. There may not be any actual contradiction between the two, but the centre of gravity of them is different. The Nicene Creed deals mainly with Christology, and centres in the person of the Founder. The Articles deal mainly with man and with the conditions of his salvation. They speak of free-will and original sin, of good works and justification, of the Church and the Sacraments, of the Atonement and the like. If one listens to sermons in English churches, one is soon able to classify the preacher and to judge to what school of religion he belongs by the emphasis which he lays, either on church ordinances or on salvation by faith, or on the moralities of conduct. If we look not at words but at realities and the living principles of conduct, we shall see that in fact there are in vogue, in various schools of the Church, many different creeds.

No better statement of the changes which articles of belief undergo in passing through various strata of social life and thought can be found than that admirably worked out by Dean Rashdall in his *Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*. He traces the growth of the idea, and its formulation in doctrine through the New Testament, through the earlier and later Greek Fathers, through the Latin theologians, through the Schoolmen, and through the writings of the Reformers, showing how, like the chameleon, it took its colour from the background; and finally he considers it as related to Christian experience.

Professor Harnack's great *History of Dogma* moves on similar lines, which indeed are adopted in our days even by Anglo-Catholic writers.

We must revert to the distinction stressed in the chapter on the French Modernists between history and dogma. Loisy and Duchesne thought that it was possible rigidly to separate an investigation of the history of doctrines from a consideration of their validity or value. They were prepared to accept *en bloc* the official theology of the Roman Church, and wanted to set forth the history of that theology without going into the question of its religious grounds, or its relation to living Christianity. For this view there is some justification, since in writing the history of doctrine, though no man can prevent himself from showing some bias, inherited or personal, he is kept within limits by the nature of his material, the decisions of Councils or the treatises of individuals; and in dealing with these he is bound to work as a historian learns to work, with accuracy and impartiality. But in speaking of values he is in another realm; he may be in strict subjection to church authority; he may feel bound by the views of his particular church; he may have reasons derived from spiritual experience.

But although this distinction as a matter of logic is clear, it is impossible rigidly to carry it out. On the one hand no organized church will regard religious history as something outside her province and indifferent, and on the other hand it is practically impossible, after a scientific study of history, to refrain from a scientific study of religious psychology, and the grounds of belief. Thus the troubles of the French Modernists were inevitable.

In England the reformulation of belief is surrounded with great difficulties, which may even, for the present, be insuperable. There is no church which is prepared to rewrite the Creeds, or officially to promulgate a fresh scheme of doctrine. The task has to be left to individuals; and until the work of some great writer wins general acceptance,

of which there seems little prospect, we can have nothing but a series of tentative schemes of doctrine, which appeal to individuals in the same way as political or economical theories. And no modern writer, unless he be extremely self-confident, or regard himself as the mouthpiece of a great consensus, will fancy that he can do more than express personal convictions. It makes, of course, an immense difference whether he has adopted those convictions in a hasty and unreasoning mood, or whether they are the result of great care and labour, and deeply impressed with the working of the sub-conscious life of the time, finding expression in an individual. But in any case they must be only relative, and can claim no absolute validity. If the views of such great Churchmen as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas and Calvin have only relative truth, it is in the last degree unlikely that any present-day utterance will rise above the clouds and mists of earth into the pure light of heaven. Even St. Paul wrote: "I speak as to thoughtful men (*phronimoi*): judge ye what I say".

Considering the chaotic condition of thought and philosophy, it certainly does not seem a time for the formulation of new creeds. Any attempt to do so would only end in continual arguing and discussion. We had far best continue in our services to use the two great expressions of doctrine produced in the early church, the creed called Nicene, and the hymn *Te Deum*. They at all events record something like unanimity of view at a past stage of Christian history. It is of course futile to suppose that all religious thinkers will *ex animo* believe all the clauses of those two summaries. But they may well serve as a guiding line, an indication, of the general belief of the community in the God of Christ and the Christ of the Church. The Nicene Creed would be much better suited for use in church, if the original form beginning *We believe* were substituted for the *I believe* of our Prayer Book. The *Te Deum* has this corporate form. A lasting confession of faith must belong to a society, not to an

individual. And it is not reasonable to suppose that if Christians really took trouble to work out their beliefs they could come unanimously to one view. Belief in the Bible takes among us a multitude of varieties, and the same would naturally be the case with regard to the creeds, unless their acceptance was regarded as a shibboleth of orthodoxy.

But though it would be impossible for any assembly representative of Christendom to put forth any newly formulated creed, it is certainly incumbent on those versed in the philosophy of religion and the history of Christianity to try to feel their way towards such a creed. In past ages when great changes in the intellectual outlook took place there was a tendency to modify the interpretation of the Creed, and even more to alter the centre of gravity of Christian belief. In the Reformed Churches in the last four centuries such a tendency has been very notable. The doctrines of election, of free-will, of grace, of salvation by faith and salvation by works, of the inner light, and other such fundamental beliefs, have given rise to a number of religious bodies. But in our day most of these controversies, though by no means extinct, have not occupied the same prominent position in the world of Christian thought. A new orientation is taking place.

The growth of biologic method, of historic science, of the vogue of psychology, has so altered our outlook and our data, that the old solutions of the problems of theology no longer satisfy us. If we read the great theological works of past times, the system of Thomas Aquinas, the treatises of Luther and Calvin, the tractates of the lights of the English Church, Hooker and Cudworth and the rest, they seem to us written in a foreign language, which we do not understand. The same is true of a great part of the current theology published in our own day. We need criticism, to remove what has ceased to be living in theology, and construction to take the place of what is decayed and superannuated.

Thus the function of intellect in religion is rather regulative than constitutive, rather relative than absolute. It cannot fathom the being of God, but it can help a man to gain partial and temporary views of God. In the early church the intellectual formulæ of the Councils closed the paths which led to unworthy and heretical views. Among the Reformers the constant discussion of Christian doctrine kept the great facts of religion before the minds of the people. In our own days, thoughtful treatises on doctrine prevent absurd views from spreading, as they do only too readily, among the imperfectly educated. But the driving power in religion, leading to worthy views of God and of duty, comes less from the intellect than from the spirit, and works largely in the unconscious strata of the mind and heart.

The intellectualist systems of theology are out of date. The ground has been cut from under them, and they must decay. Nor is it likely that, for the present, any new great intellectual system can be thought out to take their place. In the place of great dogmatic constructions, we must be content with statements of doctrine, directly based on the Christian experience, and developed on activist lines. We shall not be shocked if some of these doctrines appear on the face of them to be inconsistent with others, since they will not embody absolute intellectual truth, but will be related rather to action than to thought, and at best be only partial views.

And we must be very cautious how we mix with them any historic statements, since the ground of history is extremely unstable, and liable to changes.

I have set forth my own beliefs as to God and Christ, Immortality and the Church in my *Practical Basis of Christian Belief* (1923). I cannot here repeat them, even in summary. They represent the working of my mind and spiritual faculties during a lifetime devoted not only to the study of religion, but to research and teaching in history and art.

CHAPTER IX

CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATION AND RITES

DOCTRINE is by no means the only embodiment of the Christian spirit in history. Very early the young society is already found to have formed a system of organization, with regular orders of bishops, priests and deacons, who claimed authority not only to regulate the beliefs of the community, but also to administer sacred rites, to exercise control over the members, and to expel such as were contumacious. In the Church of Rome and the Orthodox Churches of the East such power is still claimed by bishops and is regarded as coming down in uninterrupted succession from the Founder of Christianity, whose place they claim to take as His representatives on earth. In the English Church an important and active section holds theoretically a similar view, though not notable for obedience to bishops. But it is not by any means all who accept it. The English Church has always been mediating; and its formulæ are usually so expressed as to be interpreted in various ways. It used to be said that it covers all the distance between Rome and Geneva. The phrase must now be modified, since some of the leaders in it are not in the line between Rome and Geneva. Indeed, as I have already observed, in some aspects we may contrast the Modernists on one side with both the High and the Low Church, who accept an absolute or institutional or static form of religion.

I

I shall be very brief under this head, since the partisans of the institutional forms of religion will not be willing to discuss questions of authority and rite except on the ground of their absolutely binding force, and will be deaf to considerations of value. Hitherto I have not dealt with authority, and to many this will seem the weak side of Modernist religion. Gifted individuals, they will say, may on such lines reach a kind of faith which suits their personal needs. But it will not be a social religion. It will not take a sufficient account of the results of inspiration as recorded in sacred books. And it will be unwilling to admit the limitation and control of views based on personal experience by the general consensus of the religious.

There are two quite distinct forms of authority. First, there is the authority derived from knowledge and experience—the authority which a physician exercises over his patients and a parent over his children. This is authority to which in general one voluntarily submits, feeling that one will find it profitable so to do. Second, there is the authority imposed from without under penalties—the authority of a king or a state. In past times the authority of parents has been of this type, but it can seldom be said to be so now.

By the first kind of authority, that voluntarily accepted, the Modernist will be ruled in just the same way as other people. If he is more liberal, he will have a wider range of literature to which to appeal. If he is more critical, he will be more careful to accept only the best counsels which he can find. Unless he is insanely self-confident, he will realize that religious views handed down from one's predecessors are sure to have some kind of justification, and require pruning and amending rather than opposition or neglect; and he will realize that there are around him many men more competent than himself, of higher spiritual nature, finer character, superior intellect, whose testimony

he will be most anxious to accept, and whose theories even he will be unwilling to cast aside without good cause.

But when we turn to authority which commands, which claims obedience, the case is somewhat different. In science everyone must be anxious to consult authorities by word or by reading, and will gladly profit by this teaching; but no man of science will accept dictation in his views even from the highest authorities. In practical life any man of sense will value the advice of the wise and experienced; but he does so voluntarily, and a command will at once raise his opposition. So in matters of religion, a man will willingly accept views and follow advice. But when he is commanded to believe this or that, or to act in this or that way, he at once asks why. What is the authority exercised by the external monitor, and who gave him that authority? Under what penalties can he enforce his views? and has he the actual power to impose penalties?

And further, how is it possible to believe in consequence of a command? One can profess obedience, and one can sign documents, but this does not constitute belief. Belief or non-belief is not really within the power of the will. Any church may be justified in saying to its ministers, you shall act in this or that way, under penalty of ejection. And any church may say to its ministers, or even its members, you shall not publicly utter views which are at variance with my fundamental principles. But it cannot say, you shall believe this or that. And if it say, you shall teach this or that view, it runs the greatest risk of producing hypocrites, who say what in heart they repudiate.

It is as regards the authority which commands under penalties, that Christians are most divided. The religions of authority set up definite and visible authorities, either the Bible or the Church, as having full power and authority to command; and think that God will punish, either in this world or that to come, all who disregard their injunctions. The religion of the Spirit attributes final

authority in religion to the Spirit only, the Spirit which has dwelt among the disciples of Christ from the first, and still dwells among them. That the earliest Church believed whole-heartedly in the guidance of the Spirit is very plain to all who read the book of *Acts* carefully. When an Apostle was elected to fill the place of Judas, after prayer, lots were drawn, and the decision by lot was regarded as the decision of the Spirit. All Christian powers and virtues were gifts of the Spirit, and those who had most of these gifts were allowed to be rulers in the Churches. When, in the Pauline Church of Corinth, a member had fallen into grievous sin, the members of the Church assembled, and by the power of the Spirit expelled him from the community. When the Apostles and Christians assembled at Jerusalem had to give a decision as to the ordinances to be observed by the Gentiles who had come into the Church, they preface that decision by the words: "It was decreed" (for this is a closer translation than "it seemed good") "by the Holy Spirit and us". The meeting at which the decision was taken was not a conclave of the Apostles, but there were with them certain Presbyters or Elders. These were not priests, for the notion of a separate order of priests had not yet been accepted in the Church, but merely older men (as in the R.V.) who were regarded as especially full of the Spirit. Apart from the guidance of the Spirit these men claimed no right to dictate to the Gentile churches. And the conclave did not attempt to define or limit the doctrine to be held, nor did it even prescribe any manner of government or any rite in the Pauline churches, but merely bade them abstain from offences against certain strong feelings among the Jews, "from eating things sacrificed to idols, and from blood and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves it shall be well with you".

There is indeed in the book of *Acts*, and in the Pauline Epistles, no indication of any other guidance in the Christian churches save that of the Spirit, and of

those men, whether Apostles or Elders or Prophets (Preachers) who had received from the Spirit gifts of heavenly inspiration. St. Paul does seem to have exercised in the churches which he founded some indefinite authority. But he repeatedly and with great emphasis declares that his claim to obedience came not from the Apostles at Jerusalem, but direct from Jesus Christ. The obvious danger was that such authority should be claimed by men false and covetous; and it was a matter of great difficulty for Christians to decide between true and false. In the *Didache* two very wise rules are given to be used by the Churches to distinguish good from bad. A preacher who led an evil life, or one who demanded money or goods for himself was thereby proved a false prophet. St. John gives another and a less practical test: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God". But such tests could hardly be effectual, save in a *pneumatic* age, when the working of the Spirit was obvious to all. And, as we know, among the Montanists of Phrygia, and other dissident bodies, the tendency of those who professed to be guided solely by the Spirit led to remarkable aberrations, and a general unsettling of morality.

The working spirit of Christianity quite early discovered the need of organization to protect it against the dangers of schism and heresy and the pressure of governmental oppression and persecution. According to the institutional way of thinking, discipline was preserved and the society saved by a succession of bishops, who continued the order of the Apostles, and derived their authority in a direct line from the Founder. Unfortunately this view of history has been shattered by criticism, and indeed it is inconsistent with the book of *Acts* and the genuine Pauline Epistles. The rulers of the church were at first not bishops, but those who were regarded as possessing in a marked degree the Christian inspiration. It was not until the second

century that the order of bishops was firmly established, and from that time the Order rapidly grew in power and dignity, and drew to itself the functions of deciding the doctrines of the Church and of administering the sacraments, which also were fast growing in importance. And when the Order was the guiding power in the Church it naturally undertook its own justification by manufacturing lines of succession in the various cities of the Roman Empire. How unhistoric their procedure was has been clearly shown by M. Jean Réville.

To the absolute assertion of the High Church that the functions of Bishops were ordained by Christ is opposed the absolute denial of such ordination by the extreme Reformers, who held that the rapidly increasing power of the bishops was the result of their ambition and cupidity. But if we set aside the absolute point of view, and regard the matter in the light of reason and history, we shall find that episcopal government in the Church arose out of the circumstances of the case, and served the purpose of divine Providence in providing a necessary skeleton for the body of the Church. The justification of Episcopacy from the relative point of view could not be put better than in the words of Bishop Lightfoot : " Though the grounds on which the independent authority of the episcopate was at times defended may have been false and exaggerated, no reasonable objection can be taken to later forms of ecclesiastical polity because the measure of power accorded to the Bishop does not remain exactly the same as in the Church of the sub-apostolic age. Nay, to many thoughtful and dispassionate minds even the gigantic power wielded by the Popes during the Middle Ages will appear justifiable in itself (though they will repudiate the false pretensions on which it was founded, and the false opinions which were associated with it), since only by such a providential concentration of authority could the Church, humanly speaking, have braved the storms of those ages of anarchy and violence ".

The practical value of an episcopal order has been strikingly shown in recent times, when a large section of the Methodist Church in America has established an order of bishops, rather of an administrative than of a sacerdotal character. Even the Nonconformists of England, in spite of their democratic character, have recognized the advantages of such an order, and seem to be inclined to accept it. But at present the organization of Christians in England corresponds to the various schemes of political government. The Roman Catholics are monarchic; the Anglicans have a modified or constitutional Episcopacy; the Presbyterians may well be called republican; the Independents and Baptists are a number of small democracies. The latter, however, are more and more delegating certain powers to central committees; and on the whole the tendency of church organization is as much away from as towards democracy.

II

I do not propose to trace even in outline the history of the Christian Rites and Sacraments. In them the opposition between absolute and relative views is most striking. If we regard them from the historic side, we have institutional Christianity at its weakest. For the Founder of Christianity never Himself baptized, and whether He instituted the Lord's Supper as a perpetual rite of the Church has been much disputed among learned theologians. Both of these rites have a pre-Christian history; and it is contended by some historians that when they were adopted by the early Church, they brought with them, or at all events they encouraged the survival of, much primitive and pagan superstition.

Yet the importance of these sacraments in the history of Christianity can hardly be over-estimated. There can be no doubt that many of the great saints of the Church did accept what may be called a materialist view of

Baptism and the Communion, and did make that view a part of the life which made them pre-eminent in their own time, carrying the Christian spirit to greater heights and deeper depths than others. In our own time those who are most devoted to the Sacraments, and take in the most literal fashion the presence of Christ in the Communion, are often most untiring in devotion and most active in beneficence.

It cannot be denied that the relative point of view is fatal to the doctrine of the Real Presence, and of the Mass, which introduces the miraculous element into the services of the Church. But it is by no means fatal to the celebration of the Lord's Supper as a service of Communion, of fellowship with Christians, living and departed, and with Christ as Head of the Church. The value of the Sacrament is quite a different thing from its origin; and this value may be defended on grounds of experience. Of those who take the Sacrament together, some will regard it in one light, and some in another. As a merely commemorative rite, it will perhaps not have very great value; as a sacrament of Communion it may make a very strong appeal to the religious consciousness; as a mystic sacrifice it may be very highly valued by those whose Christianity is of a materialistic character. With great wisdom the English Church keeps carefully, during the service, to the phrases of Scripture, leaving the communicants to interpret them in their own way. If the service were so altered as to stress one particular interpretation, a hardship would be inflicted upon those among its very various members who did not consent to that interpretation. Certainly no individual clergyman has any right to force his views in the matter on unwilling laymen.

III

This would be the place to speak of Christian art, as an embodiment, like doctrine and rite, of the Spirit of

Christ. But for the due treatment of this important subject I have here no space. To one who has spent more than half a century in the study and teaching of ancient art the subject of art is far too important to be attacked in a few pages. I have a treatise on Christian art in relation to modern life partly written; and I hope if my life is preserved some day to publish it. For the present I must pass the subject by. And this is the less to be regretted because, to the great majority of Englishmen, art is not one of the great concerns of life. Christians are keenly interested in religious ethics and doctrine; art, whether Christian or other, they regard as a mere embellishment of life, rather the affair of women than of men. The æsthetic person is a common target for satire.

At present art and Christianity are strangers. In the Archbishops' *Report* of 1919 *on the Teaching Office of the Church*, there is an appendix by Mr. Guy Rogers and Dr. E. Lyttelton on Christian Art, which laments that "The gulf which divides the artistic from the religious world is at present very wide, and shows no signs of being likely to be spanned". So Mr. Atkinson of the Church Crafts Guild writes: "At the present time there is unfortunately an almost entire divorce between the artist and the Church". A good authority in the Roman Church, M. J. Maritain, speaks of the "glacial decrepitude of modern religious art" and complains bitterly of the utter decadence of religious art in France.[1] He has no remedy to propose.

In England Dr. Percy Dearmer and others openly propose to take for our models the works of the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. That there was in Europe at that time a great and splendid religious art, mainly centring in cathedrals, cannot be denied. I should be one of the last to undervalue the great Gothic arts of architecture and sculpture. But one cannot reopen a past page of history. Any deliberate attempt to revive mediæval art

[1] *Art et Scolastique*, p. 168.

could only lead to frigid productions of no interest or value. Dr. Dearmer attaches great value to ceremonies and vestments. There is no great harm in reviving these where they are desired; but they are not high or ideal art. They attract certain classes of women, and perhaps for a time the populace; but it is not possible in such a way to get hold of thoughtful and strong men.

Whether there is at present any Modernist art, and whether under present conditions it is possible, are questions which I reserve for the treatise of which I have spoken.

CHAPTER X

MODERNISM IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

IN his *Creeds and No Creeds* Dr. Harris writes as follows : [1] "The firm grasp of moral principles possessed by the older Liberals and Modernists was a legacy from orthodoxy, and quite out of harmony with their general position. The chief aim of Modernists, as such, is to undermine the authority of dogma, and it is impossible to do this in the sphere of theology without also doing it in the sphere of morality". This is a serious accusation, which must be seriously met. And one may at once confess that in past times, in many of the phases of early Christianity and in Reformation times, great innovations in doctrine were frequently, though by no means always, accompanied by looseness in morality. In the present day, the foundations of morality have been so severely shaken, and the drift, especially towards looseness in sexual morality, has been so strong, that many Modernists have been in a greater or less degree affected. Some of them, whose morality was based only on the traditions of so-called orthodoxy or the conventions of society, have drifted from their anchorage. Dr. Harris has pointed out, not a fact, but a danger. The way to meet this danger is by showing that Modernism in its essence, worked out as a reasonable system, and founded on history and religious experience, offers as safe a basis to morality in conduct as to truth in belief. Within the narrow limits

[1] P. 350.

of the present book, this cannot be done in completeness, but it is the purpose to which the whole of my argument is directed.

I

I propose to speak of the morality of the individual in the light of Modernism. We have to apply in this sphere the two principles which we have already applied in speaking of the growth of spiritual religion and the formation of doctrine.

One is a fuller recognition of the course of law in matters of morality and religion. As a sense of law, of uniform tendency, of the relations of cause and effect, has greatly changed our notions in regard to the physical universe, so it has also permeated the whole conception of personality, of ethics and of spirit. With us morality does not rest on an arbitrary fiat of Deity, but works in with the whole scheme of nature. It has to be based on knowledge of human nature and the results of actions. And in the light of that knowledge we have to criticize the notions as to morality which have come down to us in traditional Christianity. We do not allow that the customs of the Jewish patriarchs furnish a defence of polygamy, nor that the Jewish custom of exterminating idolatrous nations is one to be followed in modern politics. We are convinced by the experience of life that random giving of alms is not a virtue, but a cause of social corruption. Hence our scale of virtues is formed not on the basis of *à priori* notions, or the commands of an infallible book, but on a basis of observation and experience.

Still more subversive of traditional notions of morality is the modern stress on the will and the active powers. In the services of the English Church the ideal of conduct is represented too often as mere blamelessness. In the General Confession we pray that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life. In the General Absolution

we pray that the rest of our life may be pure and holy. But if religion be regarded in an activist or pneumatic way, mere sobriety and pureness cannot be regarded by us as the sum of virtue. We need the introduction in the prayers of an appeal for divine influence to impart to us courage, energy, determination, an enthusiasm which cannot easily be quenched, an idealism which will never be content. In some of the English prayers these qualities are mentioned, but on the whole very inadequately. It is not only some of the statements of doctrine in the church services which the Modernists find out of date; but the whole tone of the services is too complacent, too easy-going for a more energetic and stirring age. The Anglo-Catholics have done much to alter the too heavy and languid ritual of churches, its commonplace and convention; but it is doubtful whether they have done much to bring it into closer touch with the facts of the spiritual life and the ethics of daily existence. That may be a function reserved for the Modernists, if they have the energy and courage to seize the opportunity.

The subject of the future life is of enormous importance to all forms of Christianity; indeed, its influence on conduct is such that it is impossible in this book to pass it by. At the same time I must confine myself within very narrow limits. If I attempted to trace the process whereby the belief of early Christians passed from an expectation of a speedy second advent to an elaborate doctrine of future reward and punishment, of Heaven, Hell and Purgatory, I should need to write a treatise. And the subject has been fully treated in a multitude of works. All that I can hope to do is to sketch the results of an acceptance of the activist point of view in religion on current beliefs as to the future life.

At the Reformation the Protestant leaders rejected the belief in the transition state of Purgatory. They found no proof of such a state in the New Testament. But no doubt the motive which mainly swayed them was the

use by the Roman Church of the power it claimed to lengthen or shorten the period of probation, which gave the authorities of that Church enormous power over the laity, and enabled them to acquire vast wealth by selling indulgences and pardons. But Luther and Calvin retained and even emphasized belief in Heaven and Hell, to one or other of which all souls at death were assigned, a doctrine of fearful severity and enormous influence.

We may easily see, from contemporary religious literature, how the rigid doctrine of the Reformers has become weaker and died down, not so much from attacks from without as through changes in the moral outlook. In the last century doubt as to the eternity of punishment was regarded as heretical: now few would maintain it. But the corresponding belief in an eternity of bliss lives on in a somewhat anæmic form. And the Heaven so believed in has been transformed by every kind of fancy and sentiment to correspond to popular opinion. It has become a palace in the clouds; and its forms are as vague and fleeting as those of the clouds themselves. The only stable element in it comes from the influence of the Apocalypse, which many regard not as a prophetic vision but as a sober history.

Of all the notions as to Heaven the most unsatisfactory is that prevalent generally in the Church from early times, that it is a place of eternal rest or repose. When one is weary, the desire for rest is natural; but after due repose every healthy nature will desire fresh activity. Eternal repose would be indistinguishable from eternal death; the notion might please men utterly wearied out with trouble or persecution, but no healthy and active creature. If we once adopt the activist point of view, the illusions of popular Christianity drop away, and we see that the hope of future bliss is bound up, not with the desire for indolent happiness, but with the confidence that our active powers will still find employment after death. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

II

There is a noteworthy chapter in *Varieties of Religious Experience* on what James calls the religion of healthy-mindedness. He starts with a quotation from a remarkable writer, F. W. Newman, a brother of the Cardinal, and scarcely inferior to him in vigour of intellect. "God has two families of children on this earth, the once-born and the twice-born." "The once-born see God, not as a strict Judge, not as a glorious Potentate, but as the animating Spirit of a beautiful harmonious world, beneficent and kind, merciful as well as pure. . . . This child-like quality of their nature makes the opening of religion very happy to them: for they no more shrink from God than a child from an emperor, before whom the parent trembles, in fact they have no vivid conception of any of the qualities in which the severer majesty of God consists. He is to them the impersonation of kindness and beauty."[1] James goes on to cite several passages in which this childlike religion is expressed from the writings of eminent American preachers such as Theodore Parker, and Edward Hale, prominent among the Unitarians of New England. Especially Walt Whitman exhibits in his poetry an inability to feel evil, an overflowing delight in all natural things, a love and appreciation for all human beings. He writes as we may imagine Adam to have written in Eden.

In some of the Parables of Jesus and in some passages in the Sermon on the Mount we may find examples of this "healthy-mindedness". But of course most of the teaching of the Saviour is at a much deeper level, insisting on the incomparable value of the spiritual, the need of conversion, the necessity of a second birth.

A childlike simplicity of religion goes naturally with comfortable circumstances of life, with continued good health, with rapid improvement in the accessibility of the

[1] Newman, *The Soul*, 3rd ed., pp. 89, 91.

conveniences and pleasures of life. It had vogue in the comfortable times of the nineteenth century in England and America. But would James, or the writers whom he quotes, have felt the sufficiency of the religion of healthy-mindedness, of the once-born condition, after the terrible experiences of the Great War, and all the convulsions which have followed it ?

Christianity, at all events in Protestant countries, is essentially a religion of the twice-born. And Christian ethic is a development which has grown up amid dangers and calamities, amid struggles and failures, beginning in remote and rugged times. The ideas of sin, of cruelty, of constant struggle are parts of its being.

It is a commonplace in the writings of sociologists that the individual commonly in his lifetime goes through a course of development similar to that of the tribe or the race. This is especially true of the relations of the individual to the world about him.

Among savage peoples generally, the period of puberty marks a crisis in the life of the individual. Before a young man can take his place in the tribe, in relation to the deities of the tribe and his fellows, he has to submit to certain tests and ordeals, sometimes of a painful character. Often he has to retire into solitude and to fast, sometimes he has to undergo mutilations, of which the best known is circumcision.

At a higher level, in the civic life of Greece and Rome, there were rites to be gone through before a young man, an *ephebe* as he was called at Athens, became a full member of his family, and had a right to a place in the fighting ranks and the popular assembly of his fellow-citizens. Among ourselves coming of age is still regarded as a crisis in life, and it is sometimes accompanied by ceremonies which are a faint and distant echo of the tribal customs of the ancient world.

It has been repeatedly pointed out, that in our own time and countries there is a natural crisis at the time when

boys and girls become men and women. The powers of the mind and the sensitive faculties of the spirit rather suddenly develop. The development takes place in three directions:

1. Sexual development, whence arises an appreciation of nature, and love of beauty natural and human, sometimes with a rapid springing up of appreciation of art, and an increase of the joy of life.

2. A fresh sense of belonging to a family, a class or a nation, whence springs a feeling of duty to our neighbours and to the community.

3. A sense of a deep relation to the great spiritual powers of the universe, and of one's own insignificance in comparison with them.

No doubt among city-dwellers, who are cut off from the fresh life of nature, and overwhelmed with a flow of pleasures of employments and of cares, these phenomena are far more obscure and less direct than among simpler peoples. Most of us grow up amid a crowd, and hardly realize our own personalities. And most of us feel the general impulse more in one of the three directions than in the others.

Of the birth of religion I have already spoken in relation to societies, and it is this change of which I now propose to speak in relation to individuals.

It is an event which has long been familiar to us under the name of conversion, the change *par excellence* in the life of the personality. It is a phenomenon more familiar in the religious life in America, where the various forms of Methodism are conspicuous if not dominant, than in the quieter and more conservative religious life of England. Several American writers have treated of it, regarding it as the primitive call of religion. In England the same process takes place, but in a less conspicuous and catastrophic fashion. Accounts of it will be found in almost any life of a religious leader or enthusiast, and in the lives of many who would not be regarded as such.

It is usually about the time of full sexual development, about the twenties of a man's life, that he often finds himself invaded by a profound dissatisfaction. Up to that time he had probably moved on without much effort of will, undertaking work and performing duties which had been set him by his elders, moving in a prescribed groove. Then often, whether suddenly or more gradually, the ordered frame of his life breaks up. He begins to think of his life as given him to make something of, a purpose begins to appear before him, and he is impressed with the inadequacy of his thought, his feeling and his will. Then he turns naturally to the overruling spiritual Powers, which men, in every age of the world, have recognized, in search of wisdom to direct his course, and of power to follow in that course when found. His appeal for aid naturally takes colour and form from the religious views current among those whom he respects or with whom he associates.

Naturally such facts as these have been familiar to the great organized churches, which have worked into their constitutions, rites and customs founded upon them. The English Church bases upon them the rite of confirmation, by which youths or girls take on themselves the duties and responsibilities which parents or god-parents have already undertaken on their behalf. There are, however, drawbacks to the rite in its practical working. In the first place it takes place at too early an age, when the young have not, as a rule, thought seriously about life. And in the second place it partakes far too much of routine and of caste. The children of the well-to-do go through it as a matter of course, and hardly regard it seriously; the children of manual workers seldom take any account of it. It has thus become painfully conventional.

Diseases are often best diagnosed in their extreme form, and morbid growths in an unusual or even abnormal development. And not only diseases but bodily tendencies

generally, whether good or bad, are thus studied. It is the same in the case of religious development. There is a continuous development from the *mana* and *tabu* of the savages, from mere fetishism, to lofty religious feelings and beliefs. And the earlier and cruder forms admit of an easier diagnosis, a more complete analysis, than the higher developments. So the phenomena of conversion may be most successfully studied in the remarkable religious revivals which from time to time ruffle the waters of religious life in our crowded cities.

There are two striking features in the conversions which accompany the services of such revival preachers as Moody and Sankey, and a score of other preachers who had power over popular audiences. The first is a profound sense of sin. It is not only crimes that the penitents feel as an intolerable burden on the conscience, but wrong feelings and emotions, and generally a state of mind out of harmony with the spiritual ground of their being. They feel as subjects who have revolted against a legitimate ruler, they perceive that a following of mere desire and impulse has led them into a state which is radically unhealthy and wrong, and the feeling leads them to an extreme of self-distrust and abasement, often into utter despair. The cure for this abject condition cannot come from within, but must be sought in a spiritual Power far stronger than themselves. Of this Power they ask two things—first, forgiveness of sin, and second, a help which will inspire the will, and enable it to turn in a wholly new direction. This leads to conversion. Like racing yachts which round a buoy, and then set out on a course the opposite to that which they had before followed, so the penitents turn round, and start in a fresh direction. The turn may be prompted rather by a sudden emotion than by a real inner change ; often it may not have permanence, and the penitents fall back to the previous level, or even sink beneath it. But the crisis is one of the most real of experiences, and the power to which appeal is

made is a great working Power, whether its aid be permanent or whether the votary fall away from it.

Such is the history of Christian conversion, from the time of St. Paul, who is the great classical example of it, to our own day. Nor is conversion peculiar to Christianity; something of the kind is to be found in the natural history of all religions, even of that secularity which seems to be the negation of religion.

The autobiographies of two of our greatest positivists, Frederic Harrison and John Stuart Mill, exhibit the essential phenomena of conversion in a luminous way. "In the autumn of 1826," writes Mill,[1] "I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; the state, I should think, in which converts to Methodism usually are, when smitten by their first 'conviction of sin'. In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself, 'Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?' and an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered 'No'. At this my heart sank within me, the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. I seemed to have nothing left to live for."

Mill sought in vain relief from his depression in books, in work, in intercourse with men, and by degrees it was lightened, though never wholly removed. He could not find, as could the Methodist, relief in recourse to a boundless source of wisdom and strength. The only substitute which he found of real efficiency was the poems of Wordsworth, a far-off echo of God in nature.

Frederic Harrison, at an earlier time of life, passed through a parallel crisis. But in his case the melancholy depression was less conspicuous than the complete change of outlook

[1] *Autobiography*, p. 133. Somewhat abridged.

which he underwent.[1] "One of the most definite changes of opinion which I can remember to have occurred in my life came on me about the age of fifteen, as the fruit, I well recollect, of the antithesis given in Paley's *Evidences* of the Christian and the pagan ideal of heroism. I deeply absorbed the idea. . . . From that moment the pagan idea of heroism seemed to me narrow, unworthy and puerile. The desire of fame, of power, and personal distinction lost for me any charm it might have had, and the idea . . . of duty and moral character entirely took the vacant place. . . . I am sure that the new idea thoroughly saturated my mind, and transformed my entire notions of right and wrong, a good and bad life." Paley's *Evidences* seems rather a distant reflection of the life of Christ, but even that faint gleam was enough to transform a strong and vivid life.

One might multiply such quotations; but it is unnecessary. The way in which conversion would be described, the intellectual assertions and doctrines which would govern such descriptions are ever various; but the process is essentially the same everywhere.

The essence of conversion is the discovery that the pursuit of our own ends, the following of our own impulses is profoundly unsatisfactory, is a course out of harmony with our spiritual surroundings, and must lead to ruin. And this conversion in the case of the individual is, as I have observed, parallel to the change from magic (in which the votary tries to get help from the spiritual powers to carry out his own purposes) to religion, in which he learns to subordinate his own desires to those of the spiritual cosmos of which he is a part. We may trace the process from the lowest levels to the highest, until we reach the greatest of all prayers, "Father, not my will but Thine be done". "Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth."

The surrender to the spiritual Power does not usually

[1] *Autobiographic Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 5.

at once show what course in life a man ought to take. Sometimes indeed it does so. Those who are converted in catastrophic fashion are sometimes under the power of definite sins, which at once become an intolerable burden, and from whose dominance they suddenly escape. Drunkenness and debauchery are the tyrants which hold sway over multitudes in the mean streets of our cities. At a somewhat higher social level, men may be conscious of a life of selfishness, a mere useless and self-centred existence. Or the converts may have been well aware of some course of duty lying clearly before them, on which they had neither the will nor the power to enter; and the new spiritual influence seems to confer fresh will and a new power. Those who have been present at Wesleyan experience meetings or the assemblies of the Salvation Army will have heard tell of many varieties of such experiences.

No doubt on the intellectual side conversion will be variously regarded. In Protestant countries it will naturally be considered as closely connected with the doctrine of the Atonement, which has there been the backbone of Christian theology. But the doctrine of the Atonement has passed through many forms, as lucidly shown by Dean Rashdall in his history of it. In the classical example of St. Paul, it was held in a very simple and primitive form that the self-sacrifice of Christ releases us from the curse of Adam. Probably in the case of most penitents, though the blood of Christ is spoken of, there is no definite belief as to the manner in which it works. In this, as in other cases, it is the working of heart and will which is of importance, and which exercises influence on the life. The thought or theory which accompanies that working is of secondary importance.

But any action of the will would be ineffectual unless there came to meet it an outflowing of divine energy. This is the testimony of a multitude of penitents. And it is in line with the working of divine power, of what Melanesians call *mana* in other fields of action.

The inspiration of the will of the individual by the impulses of the spiritual powers results in a process of sublimation. This is the turning of the energies of a man to a higher end than that which is instinctive and obvious. The two primary impulses which sway man, as all other living things, are self-furtherance and the desire of propagation. The former, when sublimated, becomes a striving not after obvious and material good, but after a higher life, after perfection. The latter, when sublimated, becomes a great social impulse, the desire for the happiness and the good of others. We must try to trace the course of these new impulses in life. We will call them respectively the ideal impulse and the social impulse.

III

The current "new" psychology of Freud and Jung and their followers deals largely with the unconscious in man. One of their main theses is that, when a natural impulse or tendency is thwarted, not only does discomfort result, but actual disease or a generally unhealthy condition of the personality is produced. This doctrine of self-indulgence has naturally found eager listeners on all sides; and has probably done much harm among university students and the like, who are ready enough to believe that in gratifying their instincts they are doing what the newest school of psychology would justify.

The primal impulses of our nature, as already set forth, are two, self-furtherance and propagation by sex. It is tolerably clear that if these impulses are blindly followed, they will produce results which might be tolerated in a wolf or a savage, but which are incompatible with any form of society. The first would lead to unlimited greed and brutality; the second to boundless licentiousness. All human virtue comes, not from the indulgence of these propensities, but from their restraint and curbing. And every rise in the level of life results from their sublimation.

Directly to abolish them is of course quite impossible, and could it be done, it would take the main-spring from the watch, the fire from the steam-engine. What can be done is to bank them in, and to guide them by higher purpose, so that the stream, instead of working havoc and tearing the land in its impetuous course, may be conducted to places where it may fertilize the field, or into reservoirs from which human purposes may draw satisfaction. They need discipline, as a rough colt needs discipline before he will work in harness. And against every sort of discipline the spirit of democracy revolts.

Yet it is only through discipline, by sublimation or refinement, that all the fruits of a noble civilization are produced. Through his relation to God a man acquires ideals, discovers that he has in him a higher and a lower self, and gains an ambition to produce in the material world an embodiment for the higher self. He learns that he may gain the whole world, and yet lose his own soul, that he may attain wealth and luxury, or fame and outward honour, and yet be one of the most contemptible of mankind.

The Platonic view, which has attracted philosophers in all ages, is that there exist in the world of realities types or forms of which all material and mundane things are imperfect copies. Such a view with many modifications has been held by thinkers of idealist tendencies in the Christianity of the past. It has often been said that all men are born Platonists or Aristotelians. And the Platonist tendency was the stronger in the ages before the rise of Scholasticism. It inspired Plotinus and Philo, and especially the writings which passed under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. Even in the Middle Ages it found vent in the writings of John the Scot (Erigena). And in Cambridge later there arose a school of Platonists, who carried on the torch.

And the same view may be stated in a relative and activist way, if we hold that the ideal types exist rather

in the future than in a remote realm of being, that they are the ends towards which living things are moving, and not wholly out of reach of careful thought. I say *rather than*, for one cannot wholly set aside the notion of a now-existing scheme of ideals. A religious man would naturally say that they exist as ideals or purposes in the divine mind, and are gradually being revealed on earth. We need not deny that they belong to the realm of *being*, but we must hold that they belong also to the world of *becoming*. And such a belief as this, far from being a mere contemplation, enters at once into the world of science and action through geology and history. We can discover through what stages in past ages the tribes of living things, plants, animals, man himself have passed, and we may hope to trace, however imperfectly, how they have come to their present state of being, a state imperfect enough, yet showing by glimpses an approximation to a nobler type. And we may see, on the other hand, how often in the process of evolution retrogression has occurred, even for long periods, even to the extinction of types which seemed full of promise. We thus get a glimpse of a world, by no means perfect, by no means " the best of all possible worlds ", but yet a field where the purposes of God slowly ripen, and where man may have the inestimable privilege of working with God for the redemption and amelioration of the world ; though, on the other hand, man may revolt against the divine will and do what little he is able to thwart its working.

As for species of plants and animals, as for the nations of mankind, so for every individual there is an ideal in the world of spirit, an ideal towards which he may work, or on which he may turn his back. It is not always easy to find the ideal ; certainly it cannot be found by the working of mere intelligence ; it requires an exertion of the faculties which have relation to ideals, and the admission into the life of the divine influence, which waits at the door of every heart, ready and anxious to come in, to

raise the character, and inspire the will to pursue the better and avoid the worse.

As this power or influence has to work through human agency, through the existing powers of man which have been gradually developed, its working is best described as a process of sublimation. It uses the energy which flows out from the central personality, but uses it for purposes better than those which would attract the merely natural man. No doubt in civilized countries it does not usually have to struggle with a merely brutal passion for self-aggrandizement. In the course of ages the primitive self-assertion of the savage has been transmuted, at the least into a more refined form of selfishness, in most cases into a mixture of good and bad tendencies. But even in the case of the best men there is infinite room for the process of sublimation, for the raising of character by using natural impulses for a better and higher end than that with which they might have been contented.

How far the process of sublimation tends to increase happiness in the individual as apart from the society is another and very difficult question. It involves a comparison of pleasures of different qualities and values. If a man cannot rise above the pleasures of sense, of merely material enjoyment, he may find in the process of sublimation what seems to him loss, and if he gives way to the Power which urges him to it, he may regard the whole process as one of self-sacrifice. But we know, from an infinite concourse of testimony, that there are usually compensations, the delight of which gradually grows upon those who persist in the better way.

But we must trace the ideal element, which is the noblest and most remarkable feature of the sublimation of the instinct of self-assertion. With the sense of sin goes an extreme self-contempt, a feeling that one has degraded one's personality by striving for mere personal advantage, and that one is summoned to advance to a higher level of being. One feels that one's life is part of

a universal spiritual life, and an unworthy part of it. One comes into the presence of a not-self, immeasurably greater and higher than the self, and one cannot resist its power and its attraction. St. Paul writes, " This is the will of God, even your sublimation ". The raising and purifying of the individual is the way of the will of God.

This phrase, " the will of God ", has caused great difficulty among theologians, and even among ordinary Christians, who are in doubt whether the phrase is not too anthropomorphic to apply to the spiritual ground of the universe. From the activist point of view, there is no such difficulty, for it is as power, energy, will, that God is primarily revealed to the human heart. At the almightiness, the eternity, the transcendence of God, we arrive by processes of thought. At the love of God we arrive by thought deeply tinged with emotion. But the divine will is a primary datum of religious experience. There are two things of which it is impossible to doubt, if we believe in God at all, first that He is spiritual power, and second that He is on the side of righteousness in the world.

The will of God is related in a threefold way to the human faculties. First, as an object of intelligence, to know it. Second, as an object of the emotional nature, to love it. Third, as an object of our human wills, to do it. The Founder of Christianity laid especial stress on the third way, indeed so strong a stress that it almost seems with Him to drive the others into the background. Constantly He insists that it is by doing the will of God that the divine Kingdom is established. I need but remind the reader of the Lord's Prayer. But the love of God is also insisted on : the first and greatest of the commandments is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. As to the need of knowing the will of God the Founder is less explicit. Indeed, according to the Fourth Gospel in one place He speaks of it as gained through action

rather than through thought. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God." It is very hard to decide whether this passage gives us an actual saying of Jesus, or whether it is an embodiment of the life of Christ in the early Church. It expresses a profound truth, one of the greatest of truths; yet it needs qualifying. For it is certainly possible for a Christian to be eagerly desirous to do the will of God, but to find great difficulty in discerning what it is in a particular case.

It is here especially that modern conditions differ from those of early Christianity. Life for us is far more complicated than it was in those days. We read and hear a great deal of the clashing of duties, and we feel such clashings every day. We may envy the simplicity of past days, when the question was: Given your duty, do you mean to do it? The social organization being much more definite, everyone had a fairly clear course before him, unless he would revolt against it. There was no alternative to the recognized ethic of Christianity, and the man who rejected it stood outside the Church. But with the loosening of external ties, the decay in the power of the Christian organization, the enormous increase of individuality, the paths of duty become obscure, or rather there is a multitude of crossing paths leading in many directions, and the most earnestly dutiful spirit may well be confused and hesitating. There is no recognized code of social morality; every path of action becomes an occasion for discussion and the exercise of the intelligence. Here we come in view of the great region of reasoned ethics, where courses of conduct are laid down by great authorities, and the impulse towards the good is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought". There are *à priori* systems of ethics worked out from a consideration of the nature of society and the faculties of man, which have had a great vogue in the past. In more recent times there has been a strong movement towards judging courses

of action by their observed tendencies and results, embodied in the writings of the Utilitarians. These writings, however much we may object to the narrowness of writers like Bentham and Mill, and their insistence on the obvious to the neglect of what lies deeper, have certainly had a great effect not only on legislation, but also on the ways in which all of us regard our duty in the world. This is a strong development of relativity in ethics. All of us see that even the ethical precepts of the Sermon on the Mount cannot be obeyed literally, and in disregard of the established frame of civilized society. They are the oxygen; but the world around will always be ready to supply the nitrogen which is necessary for the formation of an atmosphere which we can breathe in ordinary life.

Unless one were firmly rooted in the belief that human affairs are ultimately under divine control, one might easily sink into despair. But after all, whatever men may say or think, the moral laws are fundamental in the human world. Transgressions of them still produce the fruit of unhappiness and demoralization. The facts do not change because we refuse to recognize them. The will of God still works, however great be our difficulty in discovering what it is under particular conditions. We have eaten of the fruit of knowledge, and taken on ourselves the responsibility of our conduct. And we shall have to persist, until by degrees the ethical laws work out their own revenges and are justified in practice.

In the meantime we may be sure that there still remains truth in the teaching that love of God leads to accord with His will, that a will to obey Him usually leads to the perception of the truth of the teaching. And when we turn from the perplexities of the individual to ethical movements in societies and in countries, the chaos is less hopeless. As mankind still feel awe in the presence of high mountains, so they continue to admire what is lovely in conduct, courage, steadfastness, unselfish devotion to others, purity in heart and life. They needs must love

the highest when they see it. And such love passes by a kind of infection from heart to heart in the unconscious strata of our being. If the light is not strong enough to enable us to map out courses of conduct in the future, it is sufficient to show us the next step to be taken. "I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step enough for me."

IV

The other basic human instinct, the desire of propagation, is also capable of unmeasured sublimation, but in another sphere. The feeling of love takes an infinite number of forms, and works on many levels. At the lowest we have the sensual passions of the savage, but even in his case mere passion is soon mixed with other feelings, desire to protect his mate and his children, the hope of securing to the latter a sheltered and pleasant existence. To procure such tranquillity he enters into civic society, forms families and tribes, organizes a stable form of government. And he realizes that no form of society can be stable which is not in accord with the will of spiritual powers, to whom therefore he brings worship, and whose help he entreats. Thus arise law and religion, and in fact civilization, with all their advantages and drawbacks. At present it is usual to dwell more on the drawbacks of our present civilization, which indeed are many and obvious. But few would like to return from even the present civilization to a state of anarchy or of savagery. The history of the revolutions in France and in Russia is a great disenchanter.

There is an obvious way in which the passion of sex may be sublimated, which occupies a great place in contemporary literature. It is the subject of many novels, and the tendencies which find articulate expression in the novels undoubtedly have much force in all European society. We must distinguish between the individual

sublimation of love and its social sublimation. Something of the first occurs in the experience of every decent man. Indeed love sublimates itself in all worthy souls. However it may begin, it soon learns to refine itself, to grow not only in strength but in ideality, towards refinement of feeling, chivalry, keen desire for the happiness of the beloved. In a well-ordered society this kind of sublimation is an unmixed good ; as Tennyson's King Arthur says :

> I knew
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought and amiable words,
> And courtliness and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

But in an unhealthy society, sentiment gets the upper hand of feeling and manliness, so that men and women think that it is allowable, that it is even right, to give way to a sentimental passion, in despite of any restraints of duty and of honour. Such wilfulness has long been the plot of a multitude of French novels, and is making its way in the novels of England and America, with the natural result that reckless and foolish marriages become common, and divorce more and more frequent. The way of dispensing with marriage altogether has not become frequent, because the Puritan tradition is still strong ; but that tradition is obviously growing weaker, and unless the tide turns, we shall before long witness a great outbreak of lawlessness in sexual arrangements. The free social intercourse between men and women which now prevails gives endless opportunities, and the modesty which was the great protection of women is almost a thing of the past.

Leaving, however, this unpleasant theme, let us turn to what may be called the social sublimation of sexual instinct. It arises first among the members of a family,

for the relations between mother and son, or brother and sister, have undoubtedly a certain reflection of sexual instinct in a much sublimated form. Then it spreads to wider and wider circles.

As Christianity reveals a close relation between man and God, which man has to realize and to cultivate, so it reveals a relation between the individual and his social surroundings. It shows the individual as not rigidly cut off from his fellow-men, but as partaking in a general life, in which everyone has a function to fulfil, a place to hold. As men are the sons of God, so they are brothers one of another, having urgent duties towards their neighbours. There are two contrasted ways of regarding the relations of the individual to the society. There is the way of defining rights and claiming them, which leads to competition, to envy and strife, and finally to anarchy; and the way of discovering duties, which tends to the realization of society as a great organism. It was Mazzini more than anyone else who urged that the true cure for the ills of civilization lay in the supersession of the demand for rights by the feeling of duty. Multitudinous are the remedies for those ills proposed in our magazines and newspapers, but this alone is a real remedy. The comparison by Menenius Agrippa and St. Paul of society to a body, of which the different limbs and organs have various capacities and functions, is as true for the modern as for the ancient world. Everyone has a place in the great organism, and he can only do his duty towards it by filling the place for which his talents and opportunities fit him.

One can hardly imagine the beneficial change which would come over the face of society if women in general, giving up the assertion of rights and the demand for equality, would set themselves, or induce their ablest, seriously to inquire what was their true function in society, how they could work together for its greater happiness; or if the trade unions would moderate their effort to

compel the nation to concede to them more and more of the produce of industry, and think more how by organizing themselves and coming to terms with capital, they might promote the general good. If a passion for duty were abroad, we should pass beyond all the infinite clashings which constantly threaten a general ruin, beyond hate and rivalry and jealousy into the tranquil air of co-operation and friendship. Of course all this applies quite as much to tyranny and greed in the employer as to jealousy and self-seeking in the employed. And it is equally fatal to the notion that those who have inherited or acquired wealth have a right to use it merely for their own enjoyment. It is a trust.

It is a consequence of the assertion of rights and the demand for equality that the accepted relations between work and pleasure have become vitiated and corrupted. There is abroad a general feeling that work is a necessary evil, to be undergone only to make a living, that it is most desirable to limit the hours of work as much as possible, and to secure as much as possible of the results of toil at the least expenditure of energy, in order that one may give as much time as possible to pleasure and amusement. It must be sadly confessed that in our economic organization, divorced as it has been more and more from ethical considerations, there is a great deal of toil which is not and cannot be pleasant. William Morris was always harping on the theme that the extreme specialization and subdivision of labour condemns multitudes of workmen to tasks of which they hardly see the purpose, and in which they can with difficulty find satisfaction, endless repetition of some mechanical action. But perhaps Morris and his school did not sufficiently realize the health-giving and happiness-giving character of work as such. Of course work which suits one's abilities, and gives scope for one's talents is by far the most pleasant. But there is not much work which does not at least become tolerable when one is used to it : and any work whatever is better than idleness

or the purposeless pursuit of amusement. No one can be in the habit of reading biographies, that most profitable expenditure of time, without discovering how great a part in human happiness is played by steady work. Recreation which has been earned by work is delightful; but a mere round of purposeless pleasures is demoralizing and soon palls on every active-minded man. Happiness cannot be poured into us from without, but must arise from a well-spring within.

Christianity, no doubt, does not stop at the mere notion of duty, which in itself is derived quite as much from Stoicism as from the New Testament. It teaches that duty is best and most willingly performed through the motive of love, love to God and man. And here it receives full confirmation from psychology, which has shown the predominance in man of the active over the merely reflective elements. He who, as a Christian, loves God and his neighbour will seldom fail in duty to either. But it is to be observed that while the principle of duty fits naturally into the Christian scheme of ethics, there is no place in it for the mere assertion of rights. That comes from a distinctly anti-Christian source, the rationalists of the eighteenth century, and the French Revolution, though no doubt the original source of it is in Roman law.

At the same time that a man becomes alive to the power and goodness of the Spirit, he also becomes conscious that he is not isolated in the social world, but a part of a great body politic, in regard to which he has duties. He finds himself surrounded by other selves, towards each of whom he stands in a definite relation. He cannot cease to be a self; and so he naturally arranges his fellow-men and women in concentric circles, nearer and farther. Nearest are his family and kin, then friends and neighbours, then members of the same group, of the same society or city, church or state. Last, the whole human race surrounds him at a great distance, yet with definite claims on his help and regard. As the Jewish religion developed

and raised the idea of God, so the Stoic religion of Greece and Rome developed and raised the idea of humanity. The Stoic felt that he was born, not only to serve the state, but also to take his place in the great human world, and to do all that he could to promote its best interests.

Jesus, in His immortal law as to the love of God and of man, combined the higher ideals of Judæa and of Greece. And He consecrated the love of mankind by resting it on the love of God as an eternal foundation. In His teaching, as the natural desires of men were to be raised and purified by the love of God, so the love of our fellow-men was to be raised and purified by the feeling that men are all the children of God, objects of the divine love, and heirs of eternal life. The Pauline teaching goes in some respects even farther, since it regards all members of the Christian Church—and with him the Church is potentially the whole of mankind—as one body in Christ, so that no member can suffer without all the rest suffering, and no member can profit in all higher matters without the rest being the better. The comparison of St. Paul is indeed no mere metaphor, but a statement of scientific fact, as recent researches in psychology, and recent discoveries as to the deep unconscious strata of the human mind, have made clear. Hence the Pauline teaching as to duty, which has been the basis of all systems of Christian ethics.

To reach a higher stage the idea of duty must be combined with a sense of ideal values. Some of the great moralists, not fully realizing the Christian teaching, have held that whereas a man is bound to aim in his own person at the ideal, he is only required in the case of other people to accept and to promote the ends which they desire. This is indeed the view of Kant ; and it may fairly be countered by the Kantian argument that since every man is an end in himself, he has no right to make that end a mere means for gratifying the wishes of his fellow-men. But without going into philosophic argument, we may easily learn

from everyday experience that the philanthropist, however keen may be his love for mankind, falls into mischief if he does not try to distinguish the higher from the lower in the wishes of men, if he tries to gratify their obvious needs and appetites without regard to the moral law, or a careful consideration of what will be the ultimate as well as the immediate effects of his action. Indeed the whole of our social legislation since the Great War has been in a great measure perverted by the shortness of vision which sees an immediate apparent good, and works for it directly without ideals and without careful consideration of the results which must ensue, human nature being what it is.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRESENT OUTLOOK

I

AT present, among ourselves in England, we may find traces or even more than traces of primitive phases in the history of religion. This has been more strikingly the case since the Great War, for war drives the passions and impulses of men back to a more primitive level, and often crushes the beginnings of higher growth in religion and morals. There can be no doubt that since the war there has been in all classes of society a certain revulsion towards barbarism, and civilization has taken a more sickly aspect.

Beside the savage notion that *mana* can inhere in physical objects, we may place the existing craze for mascots, objects which can bring luck or avert evil chances. Between such beliefs and those of the savage there is no great difference; the belief of the savage too is vague and inarticulate, and not connected with any theological notions. At a somewhat higher level is the belief of the Russian soldier in the efficacy of the icon which he carries, to turn aside the bullet and the bayonet. It is probable that the new English veneration for mascots may arise from association with the more primitive of our allies.

In the earliest religion of the Levant magical efficacy was attributed to any unusual object, a meteoric stone, a remarkable tree, a spring of water and the like; and it

was an early and long step in civilization when men learned to substitute for natural objects figures in human form, which could be the object of idolatrous worship. By giving to spiritual powers a human form, the way is opened on one side to art, and on another to the attribution to the deities at least of human graces and virtues. The religion of the Jews moved on to a higher plane, and they had the right to despise idolatry.

The Roman Church has preserved, like flies in amber, some very primitive elements in religion, which are mingled with the most devoted service and the highest aspirations in her system. This might perhaps be justified by the consideration that she intends to include in her body not only the educated and the spiritual, but also the peasantry and the uncivilized. However that be, it is quite clear that such tenets as the physically miraculous virtues of the consecrated host, the miraculous powers of relics and the like, are survivals of the savage belief which I have mentioned of the attachment of *mana* to various objects in the physical world. The drift towards such beliefs which is now manifest in certain schools in the Church of England is an illustration of the tendency to reversion towards barbarism of which I have spoken.

There can be no doubt that among the peasantry of the south of Europe some of the Christian virtues are highly developed. But it is hard to understand how Englishmen who know anything of the noble and spiritual religion which is cherished in multitudes of Protestant cottages in England, Scotland, America and other Nordic countries, can prefer to it the materialized mixture of superstition and Christianity which is prevalent in countries like Spain and Russia.

II

A great deal has been said and written as to the causes of the modern neglect of religion in England. It seems

to me that the chief of these causes is suggested by religious history among primitive peoples. It is observed that unusual gifts of spiritual power come only to those who in solitude and self-control wait for it. The Jewish prophets were ascetics retiring into the wilderness, and returning thence in power. Through the Middle Ages the monastery was the great reservoir of spiritual force, whence originated great religious movements. Always solitude, silence, self-denial have been the mark of the prophet. And in a less degree all who value spiritual power have sought it by self-surrender and by quiet waiting. The Quakers have been in this respect notable, and in recent years their services of silence have been copied in the churches. Dr. Watts wrote:

> In secret silence of the mind,
> My Heaven and there my God I find.

But what silence, what meditation can there be in the lives of modern town dwellers such as more and more Englishmen are? The motor, the cinema, the wireless fill up every minute which is not taken up by vocational work. Dancing, cards, the reading of novels, make a perpetual din and hurry in the lives of the well-to-do; and the artisans employ their leisure in rushing about the country in charabancs, in watching football matches, in reading newspapers and betting. There is no peace. "The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

III

In recent years there has arisen a strong movement, the object of which is the reunion of the Churches. It arose especially in the mission field, where it was felt that the disputes and the competition between various bodies of Christians was a conspicuous evil, and tended constantly

to thwart every attempt to spread Christianity among non-Christians, especially those in India and China, where the level of intelligence was high. In fact the native churches of India and China, which are revolting against the too pronounced dominance of European influence, have begun to take action on their own account to suppress the rivalries of the Mission Churches.

It is often said, and more often assumed, that a broad view of Christianity is not compatible with the missionary spirit; that more critical views of the history and doctrines of Christianity indispose men to make sacrifices for their Lord and their Church. This notion is emphatically contradicted by the recent history of missions. The wonderful assembly at Edinburgh in 1910 left a permanent impression on those who were present as a visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and it marked a great change in the character of missions. It set up an international Continuation Committee to carry forward the mission work in the spirit of partnership, which was already alive in the mission field. In that very interesting periodical the *International Review of Missions* one may trace the gradual spread of co-operation between missionaries abroad. The whole tone of missions, except, of course, those of the Roman Church, has completely changed. Instead of preaching that all non-Christian religions are false and worthless, the missionaries now try to find what is good in them, and how much of them may be baptized into Christianity. Instead of forcing on the converts forms of doctrine and discipline derived directly from European churches, they encourage them to find expressions for the Christian spirit which best suit the conditions of their country. In a word, they preach not absolute and institutional religion, but one relative and evolutional. And to all appearance this is the only kind of missionary work which has a hopeful future. At a meeting of Modern Churchmen, the Secretary of a great missionary society expressed his conviction that they, beyond all other schools in the Church,

were in harmony with the conditions of missionary enterprise in countries of old civilization like India and China.

No doubt it may be said of Modernists, as of men of all parties in the Church, that too few of them are willing to give up the pleasures and society of home for arduous work in distant countries. But yet such men may be found. I will take one example only, that of Dr. Schweitzer. An extreme, and perhaps extravagant, critic of the New Testament and of the synoptic teaching of Jesus, he gave up brilliant prospects of a career in a German University to go out as a missionary to Africa. First he qualified himself by a thorough medical training, that he might attend to the bodies as well as the souls of the negroes; then he settled in a solitary station in an unhealthy district of the African coast, where for many years he has acted as a Christian medical missionary; and he has raised funds for his work by visits to Europe, where he has lectured on the music of Bach, in regard to which he is an eminent authority. But he has not, so far as I am aware, retracted his extreme views as to the eschatological element in the teaching of early Christianity. In his case, at all events, the critical and the missionary spirit have made terms with one another.

It is often said that Modernism, though suited to the few of high culture, is not a religion for the ordinary folk of our towns and country parishes. And no doubt a clergyman of Modernist leanings may, by laying stress on the intellectual aspects of faith, become out of tune or unintelligible to his congregation. But that Modernism may be combined with active and successful parish work is shown in two books of recent years, Mr. Maurice Pryke's *Modernism as a Working Faith*, in England, and Dr. Sterrett's *Modernism in Religion*, published in America. Both are records of experience. In a letter to the Editor of the *Modern Churchman* Dr. Goudge, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, speaks enthusiastically of the practical work of a Modernist clergyman, Mr. Kelsall,

Rector of Milton : " I do not think that I have ever known a country clergyman more universally liked and respected. Not only had he an extraordinarily wide range of interests, but instead of these things taking him away from his duties as a parish priest, he turned them all to account ".

In the English Church, union with other bodies has been sought in three different directions : by the Anglo-Catholics approaches to Rome have been attempted; the more moderate High Churchmen have looked rather in the direction of the Eastern Churches ; the Evangelicals have worked steadily with a view to coming to terms with what are called the orthodox dissenters. These approaches are still going on. Meantime the Protestant Episcopal Church of America has originated a movement called the Faith and Order Movement, which is to come to a climax in a great Conference of all Christian bodies at Lausanne in 1927, in the hope of finding a means of reunion. In the meantime the Committee of the movement has sent out five papers of questions as to Christian belief and practice which have been discussed by Committees selected for their consideration in a number of centres of population and of education ; and many sets of answers have been received.

Having been a member of the Oxford Committee appointed for this purpose, which included Anglicans of various groups, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Congregationalists and others, both clerical and lay, and having listened to its discussions, I have perceived how deep and strong is the division between what may be called the Institutional and the Evolutional, or the Sacramental and the Pneumatic parties. It has not been impossible to find forms of words in reply to the questions of the Committee for Faith and Order which all present were willing to accept. But in the interpretation of such formulæ there was the widest divergence ; nor were any principles brought to light which would tend to reconcile divergent views. We in England have in politics of late had terrible warnings

of the futility of verbal agreements, where there is no real harmony.

There are at present in Christendom two radically different ways of regarding the Christian spirit. The line of division between them corresponds to that which existed among the Jews between the religion of the priests and the temple and that of the prophets. On one side in Europe we have the great organized churches, with their apostolic succession of bishops and priests, their set liturgies, their historic creeds, their supernatural sacraments, great reservoirs to hold spiritual gifts and to dispense them to the people. On the other side we have the spirit of Christ working in complete freedom on the individual spirit, not even confined to those who would call themselves Christians, prompting movements of reform and of philanthropy, like the wind blowing where it listeth, seen rather in its results than in its working, which is often hidden in the unconscious depths of the human spirit, giving birth to free associations and to great movements, but not confined to them. Not of course, that the two tendencies, though different in principle, are mutually exclusive. The churches are made up of individuals, to any of whom a fresh breath of inspiration may come. In our English Church there is a compromise or balance between the tendencies. In times of awakening and spiritual life, the energy within individuals is apt to strain the bands which confine the Church. In times of spiritual languor and depression, there is a strong current towards fixed organizations and formulated creeds. It seems to me that the latter of these tendencies has been of late years more prevalent in England.

If the question were of forming two Christian Churches, one Institutional and one Progressive, the task of the movement for Faith and Order might not seem hopeless. But if a single Church could be by some marvel of diplomacy established, the disruptive elements in it would be so strong that it would soon again break up.

Speaking with all diffidence and deference, I would ask, Is it not possible that the current efforts for Union begin at the wrong end? They start with an effort to elicit or to produce unity of belief in certain Creeds. Is it reasonable to expect that Christians should agree as to the questions which have been vigorously debated in the Church from the Apostolic Age, and been the occasion of innumerable feuds and secessions? If the articles of the Creeds were matters of knowledge, which admitted of intellectual proof, there might be some hope that discussion would, as in questions of science, lead to agreement. But if the activist view of religion is the true one, the phrases of the Creeds are not intellectual propositions, but the embodiments, very imperfect embodiments, of spiritual activity and experiences. They are not indeed merely this. Unfortunately many other influences, national and political especially, came to bear upon the Councils which were framing the Creeds. And the intellectual atmosphere at the time was hardly favourable to the formation of any scheme of belief which would have perpetual value.

It is often said that the mental atmosphere of the time was that of Greek philosophy. This is in a sense true: Greek philosophy dominated the realm of thought from the time of Socrates to the complete downfall of ancient civilization quite as strongly as science dominates modern thought. Yet the phrase is misleading. When the ordinary educated man speaks of Greek philosophy, he is thinking of the *Republic* of Plato and the *Organon* and *Ethics* of Aristotle. The works of the philosophers, whose systems rapidly succeeded one another in the age of Hellenism, have mostly perished; and the surviving fragments are known to few. Philosophy ran its course, and in the early age of Christianity had largely been merged, if we except the Stoics and Epicureans, in theosophy and mysticism. The great theologians of Alexandria, Clement and Origen, still kept up a connection with Plato. But the dominant philosophy of the age of the great Councils was

not that of Plato, nor that of Aristotle, but that of the Neo-Platonists, especially Plotinus.

Strongly opposed as were the Fathers of the Western Church to Neo-Platonism, the last great effort of the Greek spirit in philosophy, yet it largely dominated their way of regarding God and the world. Plotinus has many admirers in the modern world, and Dean Inge has not hesitated to call himself his disciple. But other writers of the same age, Iamblichus, the author of the *Pistis Sophia* and the like seem to us so extravagant and unreal in their speculations that they do not interest us; and with the rise of Scholasticism in the Mediæval Church they were laid on the shelf. Yet it was in the atmosphere of Neo-Platonism that the Creeds were formulated. The notion that a definite scheme of doctrine was a necessity for the Church originally arose from the custom of the Heads of Schools of philosophy to propound systems of teaching as to God and the world. The idea of the Incarnation, of the union of God and man, was no doubt essentially Christian, and developed as an antidote to the teaching of Neo-Platonists and Gnostics; but the working out of the notion into a definite set of propositions necessarily involved reasoning, and reasoning could only take its course in subordination to the current schools of thought.

The view usually held by adherents of evolutional schemes of Christianity is that the Creeds were valuable in their time, even necessary to prevent schism and extravagant views among Christians; but that for us they are valuable rather from the historic than from the practical point of view. Any attempt to make them binding on all Christians, even the most venerable of them, the so-called Nicene Creed and that beautiful hymn the *Te Deum*, can only end in a fatal clashing with modern ways of thought.

Surely it would be wiser and more practical to take as a basis for union, or at least for a mutual approach between the Churches, the points in which they do in fact agree.

For Churches in our day to frame Creeds is a very risky proceeding, a building not on the rock, but on the shifting sands of thought and opinion. But on more external matters the Churches, if they have any authority at all, have an obvious right to insist. In three respects they are at present agreed. First, as to the general authority of Scripture, and the need to read it aloud in all services. Second, in the acceptance of two sacraments, those of Baptism and the Eucharist. Baptism in the name of the Trinity or the Lord Jesus and the Eucharist in the form in which it is prescribed in the New Testament could well be insisted upon, the exact meaning to be attached to those rites varying from Church to Church, and even from individual to individual. Third, it has been one of the most hopeful results of recent discussions between Anglicans and Nonconformists, that the latter are generally willing to accept the institution of Episcopacy, so long as the bishops are administrative officers only, and so long as their acceptance does not involve any expression of belief in Apostolic Succession or purely sacerdotal authority. The Lutheran Church in Scandinavia has a venerable order of bishops. The Church of Sweden claims an uninterrupted succession from the first bishops of the Church. The Church of Denmark admits that a break in the succession took place in the time of the Reformation. But I am assured by a Danish bishop that these facts make no difficulty in the mutual relations of the two Churches. Swedes and Danes find it hard to understand the stress laid by Anglo-Catholics on the difference between them in the matter of apostolic succession. The Methodists in America, or at least a large part of them, have an episcopal body, endowed with certain administrative powers. Such powers, it is understood, even the Nonconformists in England might be willing to confer on some of their most distinguished ministers. Even the Presbyterians would probably not allow a close adhesion to their somewhat different organization to

stand in the way of a general agreement of Christendom, if it were procured, to establish an order of bishops everywhere. And such an order would be of the greatest value, in gradually bringing all the Churches nearer together, and making possible committees and synods, whose authority would be generally recognized, and who could arrange in council a multitude of matters which have to do, not with Christian belief, but with Christian practice. They would represent the Church in face of Mohammedanism and other faiths, and in Christian countries stand face to face with a secularized and sceptical world.

It seems to me that from these agreements the striving for unity might make a hopeful start. At first it would be a unity in externals only. But to make a premature attempt to procure unity in deeper matters would end only in failure, since entirely diverse views of the meaning of Christianity prevail among the Churches. Even as regards externals the union could not include all Christians. The Quakers would probably not agree as to the essentiality of any rites. Some extremists might perhaps refuse to baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus. There are other bodies professing Christianity, which would not agree to any terms. There must always be an outer fringe of Christian or semi-Christian societies (the Christian Scientists for example), whose dissidence could not be overcome, just as there must always be a number of individuals who will never adhere to any organized Church, but will insist on remaining as free lances, whose beliefs are eclectic and purely personal. Notwithstanding this, a beginning might be made; and if it were in any degree successful, it would roll like a snowball, gathering up detached fragments.

In any case, I feel sure that it will be more hopeful to try to carry farther the existing tendencies towards unity than to start with an optimistic attempt to outline straight away an ideal Church. If a prophet as great as St. Paul were to arise, he might attempt such a fusion; but one

cannot see the probability of any such almost miraculous occurrence.

Institutional Christianity, as embodied in the Roman Church, is weak on the intellectual side. It is so much out of harmony with scientific and intellectual progress that it even seems to the majority of highly educated men in Roman Catholic countries to be almost unworthy of attention. Those who cling to it usually do so out of despair of the tendencies of modern civilization, or regard it as a useful way of preserving public and private decency. The ethics of that Church, if not perfect, are on a high level, and such as have led in the past to the production of lofty and saintly character.

Evolutional Christianity, as embodied in the Protestant Churches, or the more intellectual of their members, is able to take in and assimilate the discoveries of science, to appreciate the results of literary criticism, to put religion in its true place among the tendencies and urgencies of the world. Where it is at present weak is on the side of conduct. It is far too individualist, and is always in danger of evaporating in weak sentiment, or being misled into fatal aberrations.

A cure for the evils which attend both conceptions of religion may be found in an activist theory of life, and the practical effects of the acceptance of such a theory. We have to realize, on the one hand, that an institutional view of religion is on the intellectual side inconsistent with the doctrine of evolution, with the modern developments of physical science, with scientific views of history. And on the other hand we must concede that a merely relative and comparative view of religion may attain to great speculative and systematic completeness, but requires to be supplemented by the practical and volitional power of man. We are not mere thinking automata, but moral agents capable of virtue and vice, of rising and falling in the scale of being, with souls to be saved or lost. Hence when we have mapped out to the best of our ability the

evolutional course of religion, we have to find the point in it which we as conscious and responsible beings have to occupy. We have to lay our souls open to the action of the Creative Spirit who is always working in the world, and particularly in Christendom, and to subordinate our wills and purposes to His influence.

In the life of the originator of modern philosophy, Descartes, there was a crisis which is always repeated in the history of those who take life seriously. While he was sounding the depths of scepticism, and determined to reject every belief of which he could doubt, he at the same time decided not to let this scepticism cut the sinews of action, but in practical life ever to act with energy in the line of conscience and reason.

Before a great constructive period in the history of thought there is always an invading wave of scepticism, which in the minds of the great thinkers of the time clears away much of traditional belief and leaves a platform for the erection of a new fabric of faith. Thus it was in the age of Descartes. And thus it is again in our days. All things are shaken, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. A great storm of doubt carries away the leaves of the trees of faith, and even some of the branches, but it does not cast down the stems, but only shakes them, and the roots are quite unaffected. There is usually an intellectual scepticism in the minds of those who are laying the foundations of new forms of belief, a scepticism which those immersed in practical work do not understand. And these men very often do not get beyond a sort of provisional ethic, and fall back in conduct on the primary facts of the spiritual life. In the life of Newman especially this scepticism is obvious.

But of course this stress is the privilege or the cross of the few; for most men, immersed in active life and business pursuits, become incapable of systematic thought. They feel the repercussions of scepticism, and these commonly drive them to take shelter in some church or some

society which aims at the betterment of society. No doubt this is the wisest thing they can do.

Reconstruction of belief must take place first in the minds and hearts of those who are most open to the progress of thought and the influence of the age. When they, or some of them, have worked out such reconstruction, their influence will by degrees, probably more in the unconscious than in the conscious levels of the mind, penetrate society, and renew it. The bold schemes of the great systematizers, men like Comte and Bergson, will scarcely at a rush reach the goal. Such schemes usually, as they ebb, leave some deposit of truth which will last; but no one mind can embrace truth as a whole. Motion in the spiritual, as in the material, world is always rhythmical, with constant advance and retreat. It looks at present as if, when religion has been thoroughly acclimatized to the atmosphere of relativity, it will have rest, wherein to grow and develop in fresh and fruitful directions. But no one can see far into the future; one or two steps are all that we can discern of the long way before us.

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